

# COMMENTATOR

November 17, 1998, 25 Chesvan 5759

The Official Undergraduate Newspaper of Yeshiva College

Volume XLII Issue 5

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## On-Campus Military Recruiting Draws Ire of Cardozo Gay Community

BY JASON CYRULNIK

A decision by the Cardozo School of Law administration to permit the military to interview on campus despite its allegedly discriminatory "don't ask, don't tell" policy towards homosexuals has sparked heated responses from concerned students. "Don't ask, don't tell" has been condemned as overt discrimination by almost every gay and lesbian group in the nation, effectively blackballing the JAG (Judge Advocate General) corps which runs recruitment sessions at law schools nationwide.

On-campus military recruitment has never surfaced before as an issue at Cardozo because the law school, taking its lead from the AALS (American

Association of Law Schools), has never granted campus access to any discriminatory recruiting body, including the military. What has changed this time, however, is the military's arsenal; the simple request of previous years, is now accompanied by the threat of Congress' recently adopted Solomon Amendments.

Simply put, a university which closes its campus to military access, according to the amendments, jeopardizes its ability to qualify for a number of federal financial assistance programs which provide aid directly to students, specifically federal loan and grant programs. As a result, Cardozo, along with the AALS and schools throughout the country, now face a much tougher decision.

Word of JAG's request to appear on October 21 at Cardozo to conduct its recruitment program eventually spread to the student body, which, due to the Jewish holidays and resulting tight schedule, found it difficult but essential to coordinate an effort in opposition. Concerned that the administration was unaware that "anyone really cared," GALLSA (Gay and Lesbian Law Student Association) representative Jessica Selinkoff spearheaded the group that

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## Computer Security Failings Put Student Info at Risk

BY JESSE MENDELSON

A Commentator probe of basic computer security issues at Yeshiva has revealed that the University lags far behind other schools in important areas and thus jeopardizes student cyber safety. Credit card information, social security numbers, and email accounts are at unnecessary risk for users of the Yeshiva network.

In fact, Yeshiva lags far behind in system security. Two local universities - Rutgers University-Camden and New York University - were contacted for *The Commentator* study and were used for baseline comparisons.

### The Problem

Yeshiva's system affords all its users free reign at its computers. All students are able to tamper with programs and files stored on the computers they use.

A user can access the World Wide Web, download a software program and install it on the computer at which he/she is working.

Although most software programs installed onto the University computers are innocuous, some students install software of a more malicious character. For example, complimentary software programs, called "keystroke recorders," are available on legitimate web sites. These programs record in a file everything that a user at a given computer has typed. Once installed, this software functions unnoticed on the computer. The student who installed the program needs only to return to the computer after a number of hours and collect his/her day's spoils on a floppy disk.

The information he/she has col-

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## 1199 Employee Strike at AECOM Settled

BY CHANAN HOSCHANDER

On Tuesday, November 10, the employees belonging to the Local 1199 of the National Health and Human Service Employees Union went on strike at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine (AECOM). The strike at the Bronx campus of Yeshiva University's medical school, which ended on Friday, November 13, was disruptive but devoid of violence.

The decision to halt services and head to the picket lines followed more than a month of working without a new contract and a long deadlock in negotiations. The three-day strike culmi-

nated with an agreement on a new thirty-seven month contract.

Eleven hundred employees at AECOM and its graduate divisions belong to the Local 1199 union. A diverse group of union members including Ph.D. psychologists, MSD social workers, research technicians, engineers, maintenance

## Impassioned Protests and Sizable Police Presence During Three Day Strike

workers, counselors, and drug therapists joined their union in an effort to secure favorable terms for a new contract.

The previous contract expired on October 1 of this year. The major point of contention when negotiations for a new contract broke down, was the issue of wage increases. Representatives from 1199 demanded significant annual pay increases by percentage, thus creating a system in which the yearly increase would be calculated by using the previous year's total payment throughout the duration of the contract. AECOM labor officials were intent on offering a smaller percentage increase in the first and last years of the contract and only a lump sum cash bonus in the middle year.

During the less than three full days of the strike, union members picketed along Morris Park Avenue in front of the Belfer, Forcheimer, and Ullman buildings where most of the medical school classes and research laboratories are housed. A large police presence, including more than thirty officers, as well as barricades, served to maintain order and deter violence. The disruption to classes was minimal since the maximum number of protesters was estimated at less than one hundred persons at any single time. Observers characterized the picketing as relatively quiet with respect to the size of the union.

According to AECOM officials, all units of the school maintained basic operations throughout the short strike.

Following standard procedure in this type of situation, a representative from the U.S. Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, Pat Hart, was assigned to speak with both parties. This helped to allow the resumption of negotiations soon after the begin-

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## Matter of Life and Death on Amsterdam Avenue



### EDITORIAL

Following this week's installment in the litany of serious accidents at the corner of 185<sup>th</sup> and Amsterdam, we must demand action in unequivocal terms. The most effective way to ensure student safety from vehicular aggression on campus is to close the stretch of Amsterdam Avenue that bisects Yeshiva College's quasi-campus. In the interest of student safety reroute the damn city buses and keep the intoxicated demolition derby drivers off the street!

As has become conspicuously evident of late, the original intent for this extremely well-planned campus was to have the relevant block of Amsterdam closed not only to through traffic, but fully integrated as a vibrant campus center for student use. Will the people who vetoed the suburban campus locations on Long Island and in New Jersey please come forward and attempt to ameliorate the consequences of choosing this blighted neighborhood as the eternal venue of *Loah U'Maddah*?

Why does the University insist on waiting patiently for tragedy to befall, before making any effort to protect its charges?

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**COMMENTATOR**

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An independently operated student publication funded by the Yeshiva College Student Council and published on a bi-weekly basis during the academic year. The views expressed in the columns herein are those of the writers alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of *The Commentator*, the student body, the faculty, or the administration of Yeshiva University. We do not necessarily endorse any of the products or services advertised in these pages. Copyright 1998, *The Commentator*. One issue free, \$1.00 for each additional issue.

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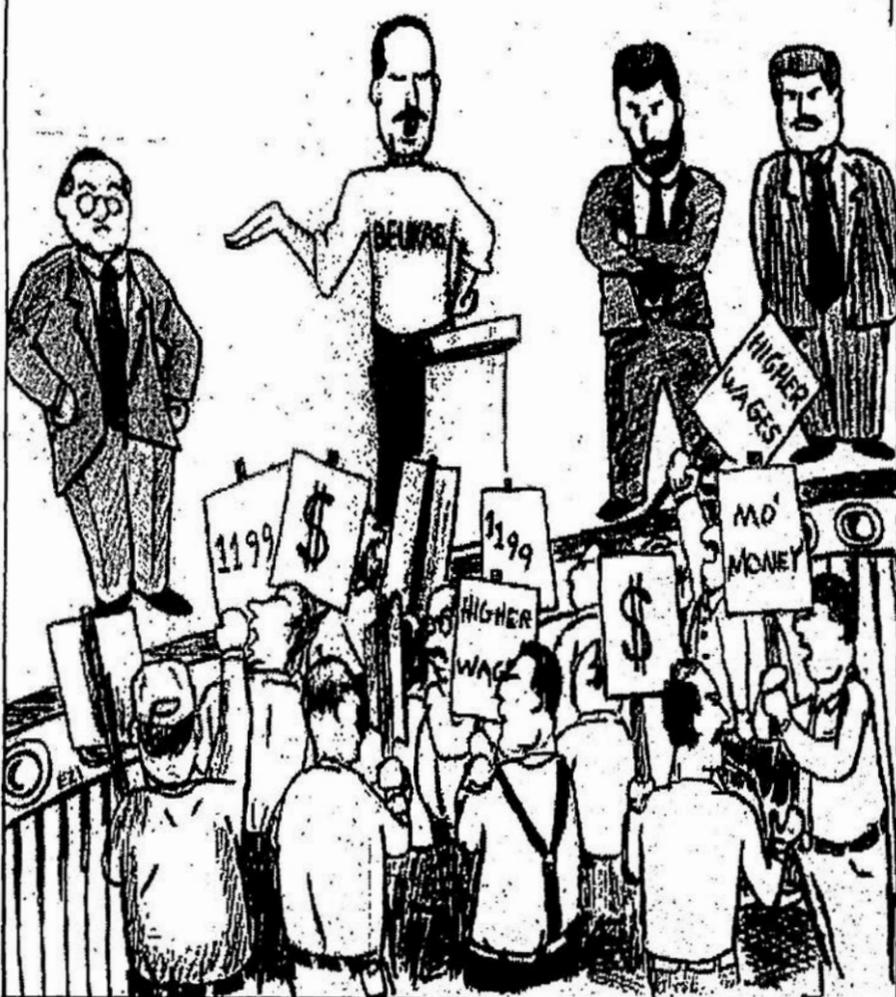
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**P I C T O R I A L**

**NEGOTIATIONS, BEUKAS STYLE**



"If you apologize to me and remove your demands, I might not fire you."

**HELD ILIOTRIALS**

**An Open Letter to President Lamm and Chairman Gottesman**

Now that Yeshiva University's undergraduate schools have achieved top-tier status, it is time for the University to adopt one of the most hallowed traditions of higher education by permitting a graduate to address his peers at Commencement.

Unfortunately, Commencement at YU has atrophied and become little more than a sparsely attended artificial ceremony. By refusing to allow graduates to be represented by one of their own, you have denied them their due rite of passage and an essential outlet for expression.

In the University's early days, prior to its rise to eminence within the academic community, Yeshiva did abide by this time-honored tradition. In fact, Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm, you were the one selected to rouse your fellow graduates at your graduation. Where shall the future presidents of this University begin their transition from undergraduate students to positions of leadership?

Mr. Chairman, the students require this opportunity to solidify their educational and maturational experiences at Yeshiva. Throughout our collegiate experience, we are taught to develop ideas and take a stand on issues of import to us and the broader community. Commencement affords graduates the chance to demonstrate in tangible terms the fruits of these lessons.

Perhaps the most tragic consequence of the lack of a graduate address is the apathy which it fosters among the newest class of alumni. Graduates often leave this university as quietly as they came. This is detrimental to the future alumni and University alike.

For the reasons we have mentioned, and to celebrate the inclusive spirit of Yeshiva, we implore you, Mr. President and Mr. Chairman, to rectify this situation and allow the voice of the graduates to be heard at Commencement.

**Inept**

The findings of our recent probe of the security of the University's computer network are nothing if not alarming. It seems that the University's Department of Management Information Systems is hopelessly ensnared in a humiliating pattern of technical impotence. This is most unfortunate as MIS has a singularly technical departmental charge. When it falls technically, it falls existentially.

With the revelation that students' credit card numbers and email passwords are subjected to gratuitous risk by MIS officials concerned more with "manageability issues" (read: increased work) than student safety from cyber pilferers, we must express our vociferous and unqualified objection. Yeshiva is quite literally, as our article observed, the laughingstock of the collegiate MIS world as a result of its appallingly porous system of network security. To be certain, the responsibility for effectively maintaining a heavily trafficked computer network can be onerous at times. But network maintenance is the *raison d'etre* of the University's MIS department. Whatever obstacles to network security exist must be surmounted.

Yeshiva MIS requires a shake up of sorts. Perhaps the self-serving, aging upper tier of entrenched MIS technical neophytes should be reviewed by an evaluative committee. The University MIS department must be made to keep pace with other universities. MIS ineptitude can be countenanced no longer.

**An Observation**

Recent labor initiatives here at Yeshiva College and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine have spurred debate among students and faculty alike. The ability of unskilled members of the union to achieve near wage parity with professors and doctors has caused both undergraduate and medical students to question the fiscal worth of their educations.

Workers of the world, unite.

**MESSAGE FROM THE YCSC PRESIDENT**  
**DROR BARBER**

Dear Fellow Students,

This week we celebrate Rosh Chodesh Kislev, a new month representing a new beginning, and as such I hope this greets you finished with midterms and ready to continue spreading good cheer towards all mankind once again. In case you aren't quite yet in the mood, there are a number of upcoming events to lift your spirits.

Together with Student Services, YCSC is sponsoring an evening at XS, the newest virtual reality arcade store. Additionally, the Junior Class is holding a lottery for a limited number of tickets for a December 10<sup>th</sup> taping of the Late Night with David Letterman show. The Senior class will also run an event in the near future, stay tuned for details.

Of special importance next month will be the Chanuka concert extravaganza featuring Avraham Fried and Yachad- Shloimie Dachs, Yisrael Williger and Mendy Wald. Look for signs for whom to contact for tickets, as they are going on sale soon. Next month, as well, is the YCDS production of "Lord of the Flies;" everyone is encouraged to attend in support of their fellow students.

As always, I am open to all student suggestions, and you can contact me by phone or email me with any concerns you may have.

I hope you all join me in davening for the coming of Mashiach, the rebuilding of the Belt HaMikdash *b'mehirah b'yameinu*; and for the closing of Amsterdam Avenue.

Your President,  
Dror Barber



FROM THE  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

ADAM MOSES

## Bill, Monica, and Modern Jewish Renaissance

Preamble: I have sought to delay the madness for as long as practicable. But alas, its alluring call beckons and I must succumb... I will release ...  
(Hint: read metaphorically.)

Some are reviled by America's collective preoccupation with an erstwhile tryst between our Commander-in-Chief and a former White House intern. There is, however, no suggestion that this sentiment carries any sway in the American Jewish community. Indeed, it seems that Jews have fully embraced the Bill and Monica "event" (this is, to my mind, the only way it may correctly be characterized).

The event has been a boon to pulpit preachers across the country. Rabbis who had for years resigned themselves to delivering substantive orations sourced in the traditional texts with which they were familiar have been liberated to rant freely and pointlessly on a matter wholly beyond the province of religion. Many rabbis, including some (not YU *mus-makhim*) who cannot even lay claim to a modest understanding of the character of this polity's political landscape, have become pundits whose views must be heard above the din of informed perspectives. They see Bill's ride on the carnal carousel as some sort of latter day, Divinely directed morality play which requires them to proffer insightful theological interpretations and, of course, creative, if wholly irrelevant, Biblical parallels.

According to a published report, Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch of Temple Shaaray Tefila told his New York City congregation that Clinton was significantly similar to "flawed" Jewish leaders such as Joseph and Moses. The published report did not, however, venture to clarify what the hell this was supposed to mean.

Yeshiva University has not been immune to this endemic need to tailor a personally satisfying, if nonsensical, Jewish interpretation to every nuance of the Bill and Monica event. Students on this very campus have been afflicted. For days, a *Hamevaser* editor sought to convince anyone who would listen that The Gates of Repentance to which Bill referred in his September 14 "truth and reconciliation" breakfast with religious leaders in Washington was Rabbeinu Yonah's medieval tome *Shaarei Teshuvah*. He was quite mistaken. Clinton was referring to The Gates of Repentance Reform prayer book, which, incidentally, Rabbeinu Yonah played no role in compiling. This mattered little to the *Hamevaser* editor who was busily readying a document proclaiming Bill's Messianic character.

Of course, we all bear a great deal of responsibility for our communal fixation with Bill's cavorting. We find the saga compelling. We're moved by the humanity of the characters' desperate plight. We identify with Monica, or, as one eminent MYP *Rosh Yeshiva* dubbed her, "that little Jewish *shiksala*." Frankly, she simply looks Jewish. We all know at least twenty Jewish women who are virtually indistinguishable from Monica (especially that one who goes to Stern/Barnard whom I

have seen at every New York City "Jew scene" I have occasioned over the past two years. Come on ... you know the girl I'm talking about).

We also identify with Bill. The man dons a yarmulke and invokes Jewish theological themes in speeches more frequently than any Israeli Prime Minister has. Bill panders to Jewish campaign contributors so effortlessly that some have alleged, unlikely as it seems, that he harbors a sincere devotion to Jewish interests.

Despite our attraction to the characters in the event, we might be well advised to draw a line of demarcation between reasonable discourse and outlandish, peculiar fantasies. Some recent assertions by Jewish organizations, quite simply, strain even my elastic credulity.

NCSY and other *shadchanut* services are claiming credit for orchestrating Bill and Monica's libidinous escapade. They observe that their efforts have engendered a precipitous drop in the awkward silences that traditionally plague *shidduch* dates. Prominent officials in the realm of matchmaking recently revealed that the "Bill and Monica phenomenon," as it has been tentatively dubbed until a fitting Yiddish expression can be devised and approved by someone possessed of the right sort of *da'at torah*, has succeeded in reducing to three the average number of dates required to produce an engagement among those in the *shidduch* circuit. The Monica and Bill motif facilitates casual chatter, *divrei Torah*, discussion of contemporary events, castigation of interfaith relationships, fooling around, and even an occasional political dialectic.

The Agudah has been, perhaps, the most blessed by the Bill and Monica event. It has found in the president's peccadilloes a springboard for disparaging the whole of Western civilization. Few have emerged unscathed from the Agudah assault. Christian evangelicals have been faulted for failing to successfully indoctrinate Clinton with the values of traditional morality. Modern Orthodox Jews have been maligned for writing Bill's speeches. Reform and Conservative Jews have been disparaged for existing. Oh wait... I suppose the Agudah didn't really *require* the Bill and Monica brouhaha after all. But I imagine it nevertheless enjoyed Clinton's almost Talmudic efforts to distinguish oral sex (which is really only onanism when you think about it from a rabbinic perspective) from adultery on the basis of Scriptural sources.

Alas, there's been something in this event for everyone - including, I suppose, myself. To Bill, Monica, and other parties that have contributed to the construction of this grand diversion from the taxing constraints of *de rigueur* predictability, I offer my sincere gratitude. I have been most entertained.

## The Malaise of Modernity

In our modern world of technology and industry that races ahead each hour, the art of reflection is slowly dissipating. Perhaps the last opportunity to truly reflect lies in our precious few undergraduate years, because to a degree we are still stress free, untarnished by the real weight of the world which awaits us at the gates of graduation. It's a shame that our time is now, because we lack the ever-so-important life experience that is so integral to a profound reflection process.

By reflection I mean taking time to think about our existence. "Our existence," is a very general phrase, but I utilize this generality because it truly encompasses everything: the influence that everything we experience and everything we learn has upon us. Concomitantly, the influence we can have on others and on ourselves and on our reality.

Tangentially, all the hoopla last year about education, Sy Syms versus Yeshiva College, in my humble opinion, can be boiled down to the issue of reflection. Sy Syms is fast paced - memorize information, apply information, take an exam and move on. (I realize that this is a broad generalization, and having taken Dr. Pava's Accounting I class, I recall several times discussing business ethics and other issues. Nonetheless I believe my assessment to be a correct generalization.) Science is very much pursued in a similar vein. The beauty of a liberal arts education is that in theory, though not always in practice, it should force students to reflect on both personal issues and issues affecting mankind at large. The studying of history, philosophy, literature, music, economics, etc. trains us to think critically, but it should also teach us how to reflect on our own lives and the lives of those around us.

This column will be an attempt at reflection, my own reflections on life. I do not assume that I am always correct, nor do I assume that I will address every relevant issue, even my hubris does not extend that far. But it is my hope that I can impart the knowledge that I have garnered through my own hours of discussions, readings and reflections to the readers of this paper so that together we can chart a richer and more productive path through the precarious jungle called life.

As I stated above, modernity has brought with it a whole slew of social difficulties that have yet to be truly confronted. We, that is the Western World of which we are very much a part, whether or not we would like to admit it, have attempted to incorporate the paradigms of the incredibly fast paced technological progression to our own lives. But a technological paradigm is not one that should be necessarily incorporated into our own psyches. "On to the bigger and the better," while superficially sounding admirable, is not the wisest course for a human being to pursue when dealing with his own personal problems. (I use the male because the use of he/she becomes quite cumbersome to the reader, but my message is geared for both genders.)

Loss, mistakes, bad decisions, failures are

no longer acceptable in this world where we reside. From day one we are surrounded by ostensible success and are geared towards that direction for the rest of our lives. Success in all areas of life is the paradigm, yet the paradigm is often far from attainable.

We all have our problems. They may include problems at home, problems in relationships, and problems in school. We lose, we fail, sometimes because of our miscalculations, sometimes because of the miscalculations of others. These problems can potentially have far reaching psychological ramifications, but following the prescription of modernity, we plow on ahead, never looking behind, never contemplating, never reflecting.

Directly resulting from this process, or lack thereof, is the proliferation of psychologists and psychiatrists. These people in one way or another teach us how to cope with our problems. They explore the emotional ramifications of events which transpire in our lives, and let us not forget that they charge handsomely for these services. In effect, we are paying them to help us cope with the malaise of modernity.

What about religion, you ask? Religion is a tricky issue, and can function as a double edged sword. Through real textual analysis, one can perhaps come upon prescriptions for self understanding. This has weakly culminated in the proliferation of "Jewish"-pop-psychology books that fill the shelves of every Judaica bookstore. But I have often seen it work to a person's detriment, because religion provides the perception of a seemingly wonderful, yet truly superficial panacea - everything happens because God wills it that way. But even so, even if God has willed it, we are still human beings and our emotions/souls/psyches are effected in ways that we don't take the time to fathom.

Emotions not confronted can be monstrous, and like the wind, they will blow us in all directions unless we begin to cogitate these emotions. Take a look at yourself, try to assess how life affects you and how you react to different situations. Do you build walls, do you become angry? What are your "defense mechanisms?" And then ask yourself why?

Obviously I am not advocating long term brooding or wallowing in one's own sorrow. One needs to move forward, but not blindly and not without thought of how he is affected. For example, as a friend of mine pointed out, the movie "Swingers" is based around a character who takes a good six months to get over his previous girlfriend and finally is able to move on. This is, of course, absurd. We must try not to destroy ourselves because hurt. However, to move on right away, after having lost something that is extremely meaningful, without examining how this loss is affecting one's self, is just as absurd. Yet that is exactly what modernity preaches.

As the old adage goes, "Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it." It is so in our personal lives. If we do not learn from ourselves, we are doomed to make the same mistakes *ad infinitum*.

Noah Streit

Editor Emeritus

## THE COMMENTATOR

welcomes letters from its readers. Letters must include the writer's name, address and telephone number. Students should include the school in which they are enrolled and expected date of graduation. *THE COMMENTATOR* reserves the right to edit all letters for syntax, content, and length.

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# FORUM

## OPINION

### The Emerging Pop-Holocaust

Amid the dearth of interesting movies last month, I settled on *Antz*, Dream Works' latest production. The plot was relatively simple. Within the colony of ants, a charismatic ant-demagogue, followed by a contingent of hardened soldier-ants, plans the demise of the weaker worker-ants. The leader of the soldier-ants envisions a colony that is of superior stock – a master race of ants – and therefore devises a way to annihilate the workers. The soldiers proceed to lure the workers into a sealed chamber where the workers unknowingly wait to be drowned. Sound familiar?

Another creative and thought-provoking movie that I recently saw was *Pleasantville*. The story takes place in a small and idyllic town of the 1950's, set amidst a background that is literally, and figuratively, black on white. Suddenly, colored characters begin to appear and the black-on-white characters react with paranoia and aggression. A massive book burning and shop destruction ensue; scenes of colored citizens being chased by an enraged gang of black-on-white youths complete the picture of anarchy and wanton belligerence. These scenes clearly evoke familiar images.

The Holocaust has undeniably made a bold leap into the currents of modern American pop-culture. Holocaust-style themes pervade countless movies, and book stores teem with Holocaust titles. Millions of Americans have read the diary of Anne Frank, and thousands of high school and college students pursue courses of study that focus completely, or partially, on the Holocaust. Throngs of American tourists visit the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, and millions of Americans support the recent retrieval projects of Jewish bank deposits pilfered by Swiss Banks during World War Two.

Such abundant evidence – and many more indications – clearly reveal that the Holocaust is now a staple of pop-culture. But while this trend may appear auspicious to those who seek to maintain a remembrance of this tragic event, the potential consequence of a pop-Holocaust is profoundly disturbing.

When a movement or an event reaches pop-culture dimensions it necessarily becomes universalized. This universalization, in turn, serves to cheapen and distort the original intent, or content, of the particular ideology. An example, albeit extreme, would best draw out this point.

In the English city of Birmingham, the city council recently voted to rename Christmas,

"Winterval" (or winter-festival). The city council argued that Christmas has effectively become a seasonal holiday, and in deference to the multiple faiths that flourish in Birmingham, the holiday should be stripped of its specifically Christian shades. Christmas, upon entering the domain of pop-culture, has become universalized and by extension, redefined and recast. Unfortunately, such a universalistic approach has also long been applied to the Holocaust, and pop-Holocaust movie themes are only a few manifestations of this developing trend.

In the wake of such universalization, the Holocaust has become a protean blurb, twisted and shaped to meet the political and social agendas of other oppressed peoples. In other words, the Holocaust is now equated with general persecution. Kahlid Abdul Muhammad has called the American enslavement of African-Americans the "Black Holocaust."

Jewish community leaders readily invoke the Holocaust when discussing the situation in the former Yugoslavia, and the plight of the American Indians has been likened to the Holocaust, as well.

Such comparisons, while superficially appealing, are ultimately misguided. The American enslavement of African-Americans, as cruel as it was, does not approach the evil of Nazi medical experiments. The sad destruction of American Indian life cannot be compared to the bellowing smokestacks of Auschwitz. And finally, the tragic ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia differs markedly in its history and scope from the events of the Holocaust, with its SS baby mutilations and acid death-pits.

The Holocaust was a singular event in world history. To compare it with any other historical or contemporary form of oppression is to mitigate its horror and to redefine it as a simply human phenomenon. But the more Americans are exposed to the present pop-Holocaust the more the true Holocaust will fade into obscurity. It is therefore the responsibility of the American Jewish community to stress that the Holocaust was the single most horrific cataclysm in world history. The world must continuously be reminded that the Holocaust was an unparalleled diabolical nightmare and that to equate it – or memorialize it – with general persecution is to demystify it and to eviscerate it of its confounding madness.

It is easy to declaim "Never Forget." The difficult part is remembering the Holocaust for what it was.

**Josh Abraham**  
Columnist

### It's Simply Not Funny

BY YISHAI FLEISHER

Everyone talks about Jewish humor. Seinfeld, Mel Brooks, Woody Allen, Jac kie Mason, and countless others are the progenitors of this genre, while Jews have classically saturated the stand up circuit with their own brand of Jewish humor. But what is the nebulous entity called Jewish humor? Maybe Jewish humor is a certain irony coupled with cynicism and always leavened with a touch of extremist characterization. Whatever it is, it's lacking around here.

Purim in my Yeshiva (Maale Adumim) wasn't only a celebration. It wasn't only about those high-minded NCSY-type ideals with which we are bombarded and drummed full of at every occasion. It was FUNNY. People laughed all the time, the rabbi's and the *talmidim* all laughing, many times at each other's expense. In the few Purims I spent at Yeshiva Gedola of Passaic people were having a ball, with fire crackers and Purim pails (for vomiting).

Purim at YU, on the other hand, is of a less than humorous occasion. "We will only stop for the first few *Haman's*, after that, please don't interrupt the *chazan*" the *gabbai* at YU said. I should have shoved a fire cracker in his ear at the fourth *Haman*! What do you mean no noise? It's not just about stamping out the name of *Amalek*, it's about a good time as well.

This to me is a symptom of a disease which YU students and faculty suffer from greatly. Everyone takes themselves waaay too seriously. No one jokes around anymore. I implore you to take out a YU yearbook from the 70's, and see how nutty those guys were. They wore togas at parties, and sent Stevie Wonder lookalikes to Rabbi Chaifetz's on Friday nights. There were guys who would defecate in shower stalls and urinate out their dorm windows. (Disclaimer: I am not advocating any of the afore mentioned examples). What ever happened to the good times? Does being *frum* mean you can't laugh at life anymore?

Here's my theory. First: young people are constantly worried about making a buck, and more then ever they are in a race to succeed. Life has become more about "marketing yourself" then actually living. In NY, the very amount of driven, intelligent, and up-and-coming young adults makes one feel threatened about his-or-her's perspective future. This leads to a more competitive and less comfortable atmosphere between peers, and consequently, a less humorous one. Second: with the world generally moving more toward the religious right, conservatism, and fundamentalism, humor is done away with, due to its

less-than-serious nature. Religious Jews such as those of YU are acutely affected by both, and this accounts for the disappearance of laughter within our community.

Whatever reason you attribute to this phenomenon, one thing is clear, these days we lack a sense of humor, and therefore we are very quickly becoming boring and fat. What do I recommend you ask? Well, for starters, everyone has to lighten up and feel just a bit less self important. That includes every member of this community, from honor-hoarding administrators to their-own-voice-loving teachers, from high-priest rabbi's to I-am-the-most-important-person-in-the-whole-entire-world secretaries, from grass-preserving security guards, to students who think that their problems take precedence over any little weather anomaly in Central America.

Under the facade of education and Torah, there exists a subtext of humorous stories and incredible characters here at YU. It is reflected in the memories of alumni as they sit around and recall their time here. It is in the stories that we tell each other over a *l'chaim* at Friday night meals. A great story I once heard was about a rabbi at YU who wanted to explain to his class the concept of *ein mukdam u-meuhar ba-Torah* (the lack of chronology in the Bible). Wanting to clarify the concept to the students he gave the following metaphor: "Torah is like a porno movie; it doesn't matter when things occur as long as something is happening on the screen." Or what about the guy who snuck a girl into his Rubin dorm room by putting her in a duffle bag, dumping her in a laundry cart, and whistling Dixie as he rolled past the unsuspecting security guards. Many people still wonder where she went to the bathroom? What about David Anziska. Unbelievable! What about last year's Purim edition, with its legendary portrayal representing the Registrar's office in an obviously uncomfortable position, an instant classic. Funny stuff. I know these examples might offend some of you, (especially the David Anziska one), but before you get all hot and bothered about this I want you to think about it. Sometimes what might seem inflammatory can be taken in a more comical fashion.

Smile, relax, and look around. Soon you'll find that people here are hilarious. I urge everyone to bring this attitude to their daily lives and their personal interactions, on campus and off. Everyone should learn to laugh at themselves and at life's little inconveniences. *Mitzvah Gedola Leheyot Besimcha*; humor makes life worth living; both clichés with the usual grain of truth. Let's let Jewish humor back into our camp. You gotta laugh at this stuff.

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# FORUM

## LETTERS

### Offstage Dramatics: Take Two

To The Editors:

I am extremely dismayed by the recent events that have occurred with the Yeshiva College Dramatics Society. As a student of Jewish law and common sense, I would like to commend Aaron Zerykier and Dr. Beukas for keeping our dramatics society's standards at such a high level.

As a past student of Dr. Beukas, I learned from the doctor that the standards YCDS uses for their productions are the same standards the "Rav" assigned to them. I find it highly commendable that this organization still keeps these standards of *halakha*. Any student who has had Dr. Beukas as a teacher would know that he would love to put on a production including woman's roles and even women, but he has respect for the *halakha*, so he limits the productions to single sex productions.

I would also like to point out that the *rabbeim* in YU were not asked for their opinion. Since when is one student

To the Editor:

It was with "utter dismay" that I read Aaron Zerykier's letter ("Offstage Dramatics") in the previous issue of *The Commentator*. Safely out of range of Dr. Beukas and his henchmen, I will speak my mind.

Mr. Zerykier, I recognize that I am not familiar with what goes on behind closed doors in your Imperial Society, but by your own admission, Mordechai Levovitz's article ("This Policy Is a Drag") "led to the removal of the author" from your production, because of "the author's lack of regard for the cast, crew, and director." Nowhere in your letter is the problem with this article specified, other than the fact that it was not "properly" researched and that Dr. Beukas was not

consulted prior to its submission to *The Commentator*. It is unclear to me how writing a poorly researched article without the consent of Dr. Beukas constitutes a "lack of regard for the cast, crew, and director," one so grievous, in fact, as to warrant the expulsion of the perpetrator from YCDS. (I must have missed Dr. Beukas' appointment as Official Censor of *The Commentator*.)

You then state that while "any student has the academic freedom to express his views in *The Commentator*, ... he must recognize his responsibility to the organization of which he has voluntarily become a member." This seems to mean that while a student may express his opinion, your people may kick him out of your club for his trouble. Surely you are not serious! By joining YCDS, does a student sell you his soul? Does he need your permission to eat, sleep, breathe, or walk? Please say no. Why then is he not to write an article in *The Commentator*? It most certainly does NOT sound as if you and Dr. Beukas "understand that everyone is entitled to their [sic] own opinion." Perhaps a more suitable name for your operation is "The Communist Club" (or "The Stalinist

allowed to make the *halakhic psak* for a Yeshiva based on his own research? Does Mordechai Levovitz have the right to impose his views which seem to be against those of our Rabbis? If it were permissible to put on productions which involved women's roles, would Dr. Beukas limit himself to the single sex productions that YCDS currently puts on? If anyone has been to a YCDS production, he knows that there is a lot of time and effort put into it and that the organization's job is made more difficult because of *halakha*. I believe that instead of shunning Dr. Beukas, Aaron Zerykier, and YCDS, we should first ask the rabbis of Yeshiva to tell us what the *halakha* dictates.

Thus, I (and any student who believes in the truth) support YCDS's course of action and thank YCDS for keeping something sacred for all of us.

Marc (Moish) Schmerler  
SSSB/MYP '00

Society.")

I, too, disagree with several key features of Levovitz's article, mainly in that I believe *halakhic* questions are best left to *halakhic* authorities. The difference between you and me is that I like to pretend to understand that there may exist views other than my own, and that the proponents of those views have the right to express them.

You accuse Mordechai Levovitz of not basing his views on proper research (proper research is a most interesting prerequisite for a dramatic society), yet you do not offer one example of a claim Levovitz made which was not based on proper research. You also do not seem to have much of a grasp of the English language, as you refer to the "suggested changes made by Mordechai Levovitz," implying that Levovitz, a mere student - one who cannot so much as open his mouth without getting himself booted out of your worthless organization - "made changes." (I think what you meant to talk about are "changes suggested by Levovitz," an entirely different matter.)

But I digress. What really boggles my mind is that you do not seem embarrassed to issue a public statement to the effect that you dismissed a student from your ranks because he wrote what he thought. Your course of action in this matter is despicable, and that self-righteous drivel purporting to be an excuse even more so.

Finally, I would like to call upon all of you out there who value freedom of expression, that American liberty so close to our hearts, to speak up and make it known that such medieval behavior as exhibited by YCDS simply cannot exist at our university. We must not close our eyes to this blatant disregard for so basic a human right as freedom of speech.

Pinhas Grossman  
YC '00

To the Editor:

Unfortunately, there are times when people truly go to far in their abuse of power. One such striking example is Drama and Speech Professor Dr. Anthony Beukas. For years this man has displayed abusive behavior towards his students as director of the Yeshiva College Dramatics Society. The time has come that he be confronted for his egregious misdeeds.

Mordechai Levovitz published an article entitled, "This Policy is a Drag," in *The Commentator*. The article was clearly the opinion of a lone student, not an officially sanctioned opinion representing YCDS or the student body. I can't stress this last sentence enough, because the current fiasco is supposedly centered around the perception that Mordechai's article was representative of YCDS and not only himself. Additionally, the article never attacked YCDS. The article was a *halakhic* question directed to the YU administration as to why there is a lack of equality between the policies of the dramatic societies on the men's and women's undergraduate campuses.

When this article was published, Beukas immediately demanded that Levovitz not only retract his statement, but also state in a published letter that his opinion was baseless. Beukas warned Levovitz that if he were not to follow through on his demands then he would immediately be fired from the play.

To demand a clarification is understandable, but to demand a letter stating that a person's time and effort spent on a well researched topic is baseless, is a true infringement of the First Amendment. No one has the right to make the latter demand, and because Levovitz would not acquiesce, Beukas took the liberty of firing him from the play.

(It is also important to note that while there have been countless attacks on Levovitz, no one has attacked the *halakhic* foundations of his article.)

I wish I could understand this chain of events. Boy writes article. Beukas makes illegitimate demands. Boy will not acquiesce. Boy is fired. As far as I understand, YCDS members are considered to be enrolled in a class. I don't know about you, but I have never heard of a student being unilaterally "fired" from a class.

But the litany of abusive behavior that Beukas has visited upon his students during his reign as director extends far beyond his abominable treatment of Mordechai. The number of cases are far too many to list, but I will try to

To The Editors:

Never have I been so happy that I do not attend YU.

The entire "Drag" debate is "*poshit Lashon Hara*." In addition, it's a *Chilul Hashem*.

Whatever occurred between the two parties is private, and should not be the subject of a public debate. If the teacher misrepresented facts, the student should go to the teacher or the school and complain. He should not print a long letter, taking up the majority of the letters page, complaining about it. That would be as much an abuse of privilege as the teacher's alleged acts. The YU paper is supposed to be a newspaper, not the platform from which to hurl invectives. Personal attacks of any kind have no place in a paper, let alone one funded and allegedly speaking for a Jewish College.

In addition, I would like to ask a brief question: Is the student who wrote the article a

sum them up. These accusations are taken from my own experience, several semesters ago, as a member of YCDS, and from the experience of other YCDS members:

-Verbal abuse against students, where Beukas has made derisive and degrading remarks about students.

-Derisive comments against other university professors and administrators.

-forcing students to sign contracts.

-registering a student in the registrar's office, without that student's prior knowledge or consent.

The question remains as to why people continue to participate in YCDS production and I believe there are several answers. First and foremost, there is no other form of dramatic expression on campus, thus students have acted and will continue to act in plays directed by Beukas, until there is another option. Second, the drama society attracts a sort of misfit element on campus. Often the students who participate are ones who do not fit into the grain of YU. There is obviously no problem with that, in fact, I think there is a dearth of these individuals on campus. Nonetheless, these types of students are attracted to the drama society because it provides an outlet for their creative abilities and an opportunity to meet people like themselves. Unfortunately these people remain in the society albeit the numerous abuses heaped upon them by Beukas and sometimes even by his lackeys, because these students often see no other alternative for their creative pursuits on campus.

I too remained for one semester, even though I saw my colleagues constantly abused. Why? Shamefully I answer, because I wanted to act and that was my only option. I and several other one-time actors have decided not to participate in any further YCDS productions because we will not stand to be in another production directed by Beukas.

In conclusion, while I realize that Beukas is a tenured professor and firing him is not really a viable option, I demand that Beukas offer a public apology for his maltreatment of Levovitz and I strongly urge administrators and professors to make it clear that he must immediately cease his unacceptable and atrocious behavior or else suffer severe consequences.

Noah Streit  
Editor Emeritus '97-'98

*posek*? Did he ask a *sheilah* before he wrote what he did, or did he simply cite sources and make his own conclusions? If it is the latter, then the article had no place in the paper. YU has many capable *poskim* at its disposal, and it is they who are asked when setting policies along *halakhic* guidelines such as *begeid ishah*. There is obviously a *halakhic* source for the Stern students being permitted to wear *begeid ish* if it is done. If it is the former, then I apologize for my comment. It just seems from the way the student referred to writing a "*halakhic*" argument that he was *paskining sheilah* by himself. That would be just a bit arrogant.

Anyway, that's my humble opinion. Thanks for reading this.

Mordechai Luchins  
Touro '99

# FORUM

## LETTERS

### More Offstage Dramatics:

To the Editor

A terrible thing has happened here in YU.

The incident in which one of us, a student, was punished in response to an article he wrote in the student newspaper, proves once more that the right to express thoughts (or maybe even the right to think itself) is not yet legitimately recognized here. I, as a student who cares, protest the actions taken against Mordechai Levovitz by the Yeshiva College Dramatics Society, and find them not only inappropriate, but also a shame and disgrace to the people standing behind and supporting them.

This is a dark day for freedom of speech and artistic expression in Yeshiva University. In no other democratic society is it acceptable that a student is punished just for expressing his opinion in public. These are the actions of dark regimes and a reminder of medieval days of yore, not of a society that intends to be modern and democratic.

I admire Mr. Levovitz's courage to stand behind his beliefs and his refusal to act against them. I also appreciate his goodwill in his willingness to compromise with what was offered to

him and clear the perceived misunderstandings about his article. Unfortunately (or maybe very fortunately) this gesture wasn't accepted by the YCDS president, and we now see his and his colleagues' real faces. These people should not be in any position of power which they can abuse to endanger our freedom.

Mr. Levovitz, let no one break your spirit, let no one force you away from expressing yourself in anyway. Be strong and keep it up for all of us students who stand right behind you and support you. In response to repression we will react in pride, and in response to silence we will shout out loud. We will not forget what those people did, we will not let it happen again, and we will not be silent any more.

My fellow students who care: I call on you all to take a stand. Together we will act so such incidents will not happen again. Today it happened to Mr. Levovitz and tomorrow it could happen to anyone of us.

Zohar Azoulay  
YC/BC '00

### Happiness Isn't Frivolous

To The Editor:

I enjoyed Editor Fishman's account of his life-changing experience in the woods with Noah, Jeff and Paula. It is a good story and it led the author halfway to an important truth. For the benefit of your readers, I would like to complete the journey.

Disclaimer: This letter is not about any two real people named Paula and Jeff. All I know of them is derived second-hand from Mr. Fishman's brief acquaintance which was less than 100% sober. I suspect the real Paula and Jeff died of marijuana overdoses years ago and Mr. Fishman met their spirits, which haunt the park seducing hard-working Yeshiva students away from their studies. For the sake of this letter I will assume two real people and flesh them out as my argument requires.

Mr. Fishman was impressed with the cheerful and independent lives of Paula and Jeff. He contrasted their attitude to a narrow and joyless career focus he sees among his classmates. I applaud this observation. It is not easy to live a happy life and when you come across people who are doing it, you should pay attention. If you find yourself living a life that does not make you happy, you should change something.

But there is a further step you should take. Consider where Mr. Fishman met Paula and Jeff: two days hike into Yosemite Park in near-freezing weather. They seemed carefree. But they did not get there carelessly. It took experience and preparation. A first-time hiker who started out with a walking stick and a song on his lips would look very miserable by the time he got to the valley floor. In both hiking and life, it takes hard work and skill to make it look effortless.

Now consider Paula and Jeff's life. Although they are not career-obsessed, both completed the rigorous coursework and licensing requirements to be registered nurses. They work four days and get a four-day weekend, but that requires working "shift-and-shift" during the four working days. Think about that. You wake up at 5 AM

Monday morning to work the 7 AM to 3 PM shift. You get home at 4 PM, eat, do housework and grab a nap before leaving for the 11 PM to 7 AM shift. You get home exhausted from working all night, eat, fall into bed, and awaken to your 1 PM alarm to get ready for the 3 PM to 11 PM Tuesday shift. You're only one-third of the way through your four-day workweek. Yes, you finish Thursday afternoon, and don't have to go back until Tuesday morning, but you pay a price for those two extra days. RN's supervise life-and-death decisions, often in understaffed and overworked job environments. This is not the life of a careless or lazy person.

Paula and Jeff seem to have lots of friends and interests. They brew their own beer and Jeff plays in a band. Making good beer is hard, but not as hard as drinking it if it's bad. It takes lots of practice to play an instrument well, lots of work to keep a band employed and together. It even takes attention and work simply to have good friends.

Paula and Jeff got to where they are, or where I think Mr. Fishman imagines them to be, through education, careful planning and the ability to finish what they start. It takes hard work and skill to make it look effortless. There were choices made along the way as well. For example, this lifestyle does not appear to have room for children. Someone who thoughtlessly set out to imitate Paula and Jeff, without proper preparation, would crash and burn.

I said before that when you meet happy people, you should pay attention. That means you should think about how they got where they are. You will usually find education, work, planning and delayed gratification are the main ingredients. On the other hand, none of these things guarantee happiness. If you study things you are not interested in, work at drudgery, plan within narrow constraints and delay gratification pointlessly you will be miserable.

The value of meeting the Paula and Jeff's of this world is that they encourage you to set a higher standard of happiness and

### Offstage Dramatics: Utter Disappointment

To the Editor:

I do not recall my first semester on campus with great fondness. One of the few highlights that semester was taking part in the YCDS production of "Sherlock Holmes' Last Case." Props Master was an extremely enlightening position, because my rehearsal nights consisted of listening to Dr. Anthony Beukas spew insults that I only dream to match in both wit and content in my articles on a daily basis.

This semester a most unfortunate matter has come to my attention. Mordechai Levovitz, a good friend of mine, was thrown out of the dramatics society for expressing his views concerning improvements that YCDS could endeavor to achieve. Let's think about this for a minute. What does the First Amendment offer to the American citizen? Firstly, it offers religious freedom. Second, it guarantees freedom of speech. In this university, there should be nothing more sacred. Both of these rights have given the Jewish people its safest home in known history. By allowing Dr. Beukas to punish Mr. Levovitz for

expressing his opinions we are denying our student body the right to intellectual discourse.

Though my own column is entitled FACT, NOT OPINION, remember that ART is inherently subjective. If it wasn't, we would all like the same music I do. That would leave me without my own column and very little to get upset about. However, we are not here to argue the nature of art. That should be left to those professors who teach it as a subject.

Dr. Beukas' actions are a perversion of justice and should be corrected immediately. The last thing this University needs is a bully who chooses to punish his students for expressing their own opinions. If others feel as I do, they should insist on a public apology by the good doctor. If they do not, then Dr. Beukas' opinions must surely be this University's, in which case I am immensely disappointed in having chosen to attend this authoritarian institution.

David Rappaport  
YC '99

### Web Page Travesty

To The Editor:

It is a travesty that Yeshiva University does not link to *The Commentator* web site directly from its bland and uninformative main public relations web page. *The Commentator* is the students' only voice in a entrenched university bureaucracy/ theocracy which tries to squelch

broaden the options you consider. Maybe you should abandon your pre-law major and look into nursing school. Maybe you should pursue hiking or home-brewing or music seriously. Maybe you should have more friends and fewer contacts. Or maybe you should just make up your mind to be happy, maybe you are doing exactly what you want but you have lost sight of why you are doing it. If you decide to be happy and devote thought and energy to the cause, you will probably succeed. If you just put one foot in front of the other while looking at the ground, you will probably end up somewhere you don't want to be.

I have one other point to make on a different subject. Mr. Fishman writes that "we shared a couple of beers" then everyone drove away. If four people shared two beers then they should be below the legal limit, but if it was two beers each, or if "a couple" means three or four each, then this might have been illegal. Even if the drivers were below the legal limit, it is foolish to drink any alcohol immediately before driving. Young drivers are four times as likely as average drivers to kill themselves and others; YU students are particularly handicapped because most never drive during the semester so their skills are rusty; YU students after "a couple" beers on a rough road in the dark do not bear thinking about.

Aaron Brown  
Professor of Finance  
Sy Syms School of Business

individual student opinions. As a graduate of YU (1995), I would definitely donate directly to future volumes of *The Commentator* rather than to the administration itself.

Steven Gordon  
YC '95

*Mordechai Fishman replies:*

Firstly, modern medicine has proven that no one can die of a marijuana overdose no matter the amount or potency ingested. (Department of Health and Human Services, "Marijuana and Cannaboids" pp. 131-44 in "Drug Abuse and Drug Abuse Research - Third Triennial Report to Congress from the Secretary," 1991.)

As to Jeff and Paula and their ilk, you understand my point exactly, and eloquently state what it takes to get there. Happiness in life is something that requires effort and planning, and never did I intend to indicate otherwise. What I find pleasantly surprising is your candid recommendation to all, that if what one is doing is not making him happy a change in vocation or habit should be considered. As a student who took your vaunted Principles of Finance course, I sat with many others who planned on careers in business and finance, not necessarily due to their interest in the fields, but rather, because they were in pursuit of financial success no matter what the price. While I learned about long bonds and Japanese yen, it would have been of great benefit to hear your exhortations to happiness in class as well.

Lastly, your point about drinking and driving cannot be stressed more. We camped where Paula and Jeff had parked their truck and didn't drive any further, while only Paula drank because Jeff was driving. (We also nearly froze to death in the twenty-degree temperatures that night, neatly illustrating your point about planning and being prepared.) But you are totally correct in pointing out that alcohol, Yeshiva students, and motor vehicles is a dangerously combustible mix that should be avoided at all costs.

## Student Soap Box

### Emmesdika Yidden

BY YOSEF LEVINE

It became evident to me that modern society's typical yeshiva student is exposed to many *halakhic* aspects that were not taught by Jewish educators in the 1950s & 1960s. Simple, clear-cut laws such as *Ahavas Yisroel*, *Kisai HaRosh*, *Tznius*, and *Kol Isha* were absent from the yeshiva curriculum in the post-war era. This revelation was prompted by the fact that there are so many young men and women who go through the yeshiva educational system, and after a year of intense learning in Eretz Yisroel many begin living more religious lives than those of their parents.

It is no longer uncommon to see a married couple (the *yeshivish* husband garbed in the routine black pants-white shirt costume while his wife dons a long skirt while wearing a wig on her head) frequenting kosher food establishments with their parents and in-laws who, for lack of a better term, are Modern Orthodox.

My friends, we all see the above scenario everyday. It may in fact illustrate our own lives. Do we ever ask ourselves: am I better than my parents because I am more religious than my family? Of course not! We love and respect our parents, and most of them will support us in our spiritual endeavors and religious growth.

Let's be honest – even if a situation arises where we may have feelings of animosity towards our parents, this should only be temporary. The profound attachment to our loved ones is so securely moored within our hearts, that in most circumstances, minor feelings of dislike are short lived.

So this is the relationship with our beloved parents and other close confidants, but what about the relationships with our fellow students, our teachers, and for that matter, the rest of society?

Social interaction is an unavoidable task in life. Although we may not look favorably on many of the people we encounter, nevertheless, we are still forced to deal with them in some shape or form. The complexity of human nature leads many to be judgmental regarding ideas, situations, and in our case, people. We have undoubtedly all heard our friends voicing their opinions on various matters such as the way someone dresses, the style of one's hair, or a perceived lack in someone's *Avodas Hashem*.

Although criticism is healthy if utilized for self-improvement, it is dangerous and can lead to intolerance. The ramifications of intolerance have historically been proven time and time again by increased social and religious inequity. On a smaller scale, the lack of respect for another often leads to rivalries that destroy many business partnerships, friendships and even marriages.

Contemporary social preachers are well aware of this problem and have had many failed attempts to limit intolerance with emotional speeches, utilizing glorified words such as *equality*, *fairness*, and *toleration*. Why have these attempts failed to bring peace and harmony to this social sphere?

From a Jewish perspective, the answer is quite clear. The American Heritage Dictionary defines tolerance as, "the capacity for or the practice of recognizing and respecting the beliefs or practices of others." Or in layman's terms, "leeway for variations from a standard." These mighty ideals are spectacular when practiced, but in reality, it is nothing more than a clown putting on a mask to hide his true colors. Tolerance, according to its own definition, is superficial. *Leeway* is not necessarily a conscious willingness. We are merely acting in a certain way or making certain verbalizations in reaction to a superficial idea that has permeated society as a whole, not because we have a deep desire to tolerate others. The Torah teaches us that *Ahavas Yisroel* (Brotherly Love) must be the internal source for all social interaction with all people. Since we are all equal as people, everyone should be treated with the same realized internal love, compassion, and respect. The *Rambam* teaches in *Hilchos Teshuvah* that "a person does not come to sin until the spirit of folly enters him [his heart]." To put it more simply, one does not come to act in a malicious fashion 24-7, rather, it is only when evil persuades him to do so. The general desire of a Jew is act with benevolence.

We are at an impressionable time in our lives when change becomes more difficult with age. Let the selfless relationship we have with our parents exemplify the same internalization that should be present while interacting with business associates, friends, family and the rest of society.

## THE COMMENTATOR

is currently soliciting submissions for the Student Soap Box, a recently launched feature devoted to sharing student viewpoints with the broader University community.

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# Talmudic "Study Buddy" Program Pays Dividends to College and High School Students

BY ELIE NEUMAN

For many at Yeshiva, mornings are reserved for learning with other courses taking a back seat. Nighttime, for many, is devoted to class work and having fun. For others, it is another opportunity to spend time in the *beit midrash*, reviewing morning *shiur* or delving into other areas of study. For high school students dorming at MTA, this presents a marvelous opportunity to learn with their older compatriots.

Over the past few years, this idea has been concretized in the form of the High School Chavrusa Program, in which both college and *semikha* students have night *sefer* together. The program is open to any MTA students who wish to participate. Those dorming are required to participate in the program.

Approximately thirty-five sets of *chavrutot* currently learn together under the program with most focusing on reviewing that day's high school *shiur*. For the high school students, the program is of great benefit since college students can clarify points that they might have found difficult or had missed. Often, the older *chavrutot* provide their younger counterparts with new insights that their *rebbe*, rabbinic instructor, had not brought up in *shiur*.

In this way, the older *chavrutot* serve as tutors for the high schoolers. Those high school students who participate in the program have a leg up on their classmates by having someone to aid in their understanding of their learning. One high school student claimed to have seen "a tremendous improvement in my learn-

ing since I began learning with my college *chavruta*."

In addition to simply learning, being paired with an older *chavruta* provides a key benefit for younger students. Faced with decisions regarding which yeshiva to attend in Israel, or whether to go to Israel at all, college students who have been through the process have a useful perspective to share. The setup gives high school students who might have certain issues they want to discuss with an older, more mature individual just such an opportunity.

Far from being a one-sided deal, the program has also proved helpful to the other half of the partnership. Learning with someone younger, who generally does not have the same level of understanding, forces older students to break down the concepts found in the Talmud into smaller parts. It makes them explain ideas in a clear, precise manner. This, in turn, helps them in their own learning.

More importantly, for those considering teaching jobs the program gives them the opportunity to develop the skills that only hands-on teaching can provide. YC Junior Levi Mostofsky noted that the program "gives me the experience in *chinuch*, Jewish education, that will help me decide what path to choose later in life.

Besides the obvious benefits to both parties involved, the program has an added, less obvious benefit. Since the college began allowing MTA students to take college courses in lieu of high school electives, an element of friction has developed between the two schools. College students complain that the MTA

students in their class lower the level of the class, making it unbearable, at times. The high school rejoins that college students don't give them a chance to show that they can participate in class in a meaningful way. The joint learning program provides a sense of unity on campus, bringing together high schoolers and college students in a way that promotes mutual learning.

On a different level, the college participants have expressed a tremendous

amount of personal satisfaction and pride in helping students. For many in the high school, who might not otherwise be learning at night, they have a chance to help students reach their potential in learning. Ariel Sloan, a YC senior, stated, "I get a genuinely wonderful feeling when I see that I have successfully communicated the proper *p'shat* in a Talmudic passage. My *chavruta* now understands what he previously thought was unattainable."

## Stern Life Debbie Shofet

So I decide to rent Jackie Chan's "First Strike" because, dare I say it, he's a genius. I make my way over from Schottenstein to Brookdale Hall, for the big screen TV is there, and you need to watch the man on a big screen.

I put in the video and a preview for the movie "Shine" comes on. You know, the one about the retarded pianist. At this point, another Stern girl walks in, sees the preview, and says in her own little Stern girl way, "Oh, my god! Is this movie about Beethoven?" My initial reaction: Huh? My second reaction: How, in the name of all that is holy, could this girl think "Shine" is about Beethoven? I can understand if she saw a period piece on the screen, but my god, the man was wearing a trench coat and smoking a cigarette in a bar. IN A BAR!!! Beethoven? I think not. And besides, the only recent movie about Beethoven was "Immortal Beloved" starring, yup, that's right, Gary Oldman. Allow me to add that his perfor-

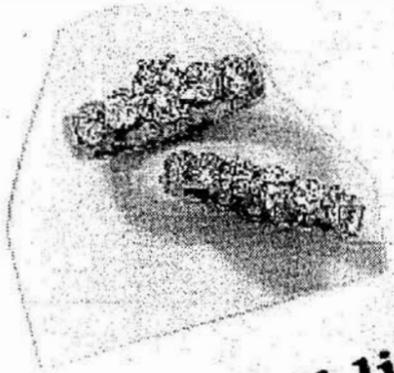
mance was riveting.

Speaking about movies, I've been hearing rumors that movies are going up to fifteen dollars in Manhattan. If these rumors are true, I would like to know exactly whom Satan slept with to bring this plague upon Manhattan. For fifteen dollars the actors should perform in the theaters naked.

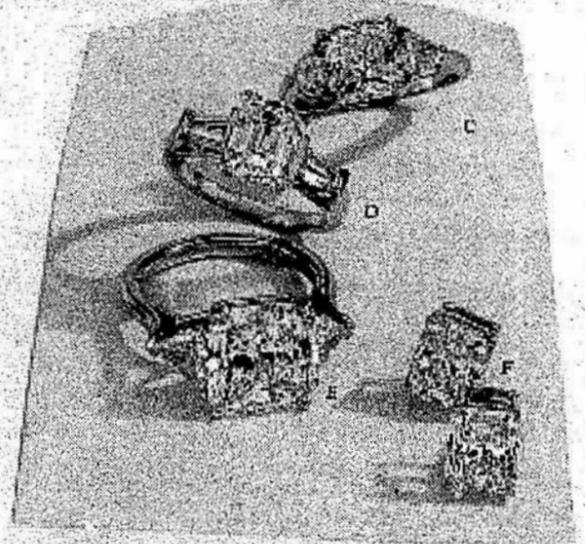
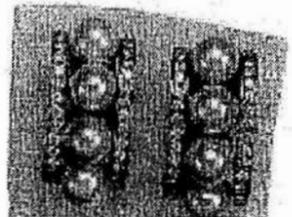
Getting back to Stern girls, I'm not saying that Stern girls are stupid or that I feel like stringing them up by their headbands, it's just that sometimes it goes too far. It feels like a whole different world in Stern. A world where girls don't move their jaws when they speak and they hand out flyers for used bridesmaid's gowns and ring designers. That, my friends, is just the tip of the iceberg. I could go into some great stories that will make you want to smack my ass and call me Judy, but I'll save those for another time. To all those reading this article, keep in mind that I am a Stern girl and such is my life.

Member of Diamond Dealers club, NY

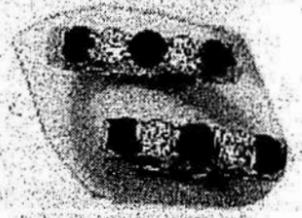
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## Discriminatory Recruiting

### Continued from page 1

resolved to "show them that they did."

GALLSA began by presenting a petition bearing approximately 200 Cardozo student signatures to the administration. The petition expressed student opposition to the military and its presence on campus. The group then turned to the SBA (Student Bar Association) to enlist its support in adopting a resolution defining more clearly its position and recommendations to the law school administration. Such a resolution was passed, making the SBA's opposition to on-campus military recruiting official.

Once these preliminary measures were taken, GALLSA convened a meeting with Cardozo Deans Paul Verkuil, Michael Hirt, and Ellen Chierick to discuss immediate action. Within days, a group of 15 students, including SBA members, gay and lesbian students, and other interested parties met with the deans to address the situation with a view to two questions: Should Cardozo allow JAG on campus? And if so, what steps could the administration take to minimize the effects of such a potentially harmful decision?

As in past years, the administration turned to the AALS code to resolve the first issue. Whereas previous years found the AALS supportive of a denial of the military's request to visit the campus, adoption of the Solomon Amendments has changed the scenario. An AALS decision to continue its policy would jeopardize the funds of many institutions that would feel compelled to comply with their suggestion. On the other hand, its original objection to the military's on-campus presence remains intact. AALS' compromise maintained its commitment to non-discrimination and the resulting recommendation to refuse campus access to military recruiters, but deemed an alternative decision "excusable non-compliance" consistent with its ideological policy.

Many other law schools, among them Harvard Law School and NYU Law School, chose to continue their denial policy toward JAG and live with the financial consequences of this decision. Cardozo did not.

"The law school administration is not happy about the situation; we feel our hands are tied," admitted a concerned Michael Hirt, Associate Dean at Cardozo Law School. Allowing the military to recruit on campus is technically a violation of school policy, because Cardozo's equal treatment policy ensures the maintenance of a hostility-free environment for students of all persuasions (sexual orientation is included under this clause) and equal access to all of the institution's programs.

Dean Hirt acknowledged that the military's very presence might create what gay and lesbian students would deem a "hostile environment," and that under normal circumstances, he "does not invite employers who discriminate in their hiring on campus. This includes, of course, employers who discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation."

Additionally, while Cardozo's Center for Professional Development might encourage equal treatment, by allowing the military to recruit on campus, it in effect prevented gay and lesbian student participation in at least one facet of its recruitment program.

GALLSA and its supporters, however, seem even more concerned that allowing JAG on campus in effect sends a message to all that the administration has created what Selinkoff deemed, "a two-tiered system of enforcement of its non-discrimination policy; most groups are fully protected, gay and lesbians are only semi-protected." Those protesting understood the necessity to allow JAG to recruit students who wished to join, but felt that doing so on campus was uncalled for. In the words of one GALLSA member, not forcing the military to conduct its interviews off campus in a local hotel, for example, almost seemed like a "donation on the part of Cardozo" to an institution that espoused an unacceptable policy.

The other major issue at the faculty-student meeting involved techniques that Cardozo would take to ameliorate the effects of their decision. AALS recommended that any institution that chooses to exercise "excusable non-compliance" take at least some action designed to minimize the damage caused.

The GALLSA group, taking their lead from AALS, proposed a number of specific items that would accomplish this goal. Thematically, the administration's compliance with JAG's request

had to be tempered with a clear expression of its opposition to the decision they were forced to make. The administration complied with requests to place disclaimers on all military applications denoting that JAG's presence on campus was not by choice, but by pressure from the Solomon Amendments. Military recruiters were also set apart from other on-campus recruiting organizations and no refreshments were provided for JAG representatives.

Some of the agitated students, nevertheless, point to the administration's decision to collect resumes and schedule interviews for JAG's recruitment session as evidence that Cardozo is not fully committed to the amelioration effort. Administrators attribute the above decision to mere oversight, claiming that, in the future, such additional efforts can be implemented, provided that the Solomon Amendments don't preclude such action.

The Cardozo administration, albeit sympathetic to the position of GALLSA and its supporters, defended its decision by claiming that "like most schools, we grudgingly allowed the military on campus because ultimately we felt that we didn't have a choice." Associate Dean Hirt pointed to the fact that by denying JAG campus access, the apparently "sensitive" option, would in fact jeopardize the very same student body that the administration would be aiming to protect.

The funding threatened by the Solomon Amendments includes three types of federal grants: Perkins Loan Program money, work study funding, and the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunities Grant. The important point, stressed Hirt, is that student moneys are threatened. If so, standing up for gay and lesbian students would at the same time be a display of insensitivity to the rest of the student body—leaving the administration with an even more difficult question than money v. ideological issue.

Just how much money is being threatened? The answer to this question lies at the base of GALLSA's argument. Cardozo has never followed through on an AALS recommendation to properly estimate the amount of financial aid in question. Cardozo administrators chalk this up to insufficient data. Selinkoff, however, deems this inexcusable.

The estimation problem that the administration is experiencing results from a legal ambiguity in the Solomon Amendments. If the three areas of funding were to only be taken away from the law school, Hirt speculated that the estimated loss of no more than \$10,000 would probably tilt the scale in favor of GALLSA's request, at least in his opinion. Yeshiva University's officials, however, maintain that it is possible, under the Solomon Amendments, to disqualify the entire university from receipt of these funds making the stakes too high.

Selinkoff contends that the administration's only real estimate effectively amounts to an admission that, to them, "their no-discrimination policy is not worth \$10,000. The needs and rights of gay and lesbian students are a very large weight on the scale. It would take an extremely large loss of funding to justify violating the school's non-discrimination policy and jeopardizing the rights of the schools gay and lesbian students — certainly \$10,000 doesn't outweigh those rights."

A follow-up meeting is scheduled for November 23 to discuss GALLSA concerns and administrative plans for future considerations.

Lurking beneath the surface of the current debate are the still unhealed wounds inflicted just four years ago. At that time, Cardozo administrators had confronted a similar issue when gay and lesbian students at Cardozo responded to a visible campaign to eliminate their student group. When asked whether that played a role in the recent debate, Dean Hirt acknowledged that, "the issue and history resonated through this dispute," but that "there was no precise link."

These issues confront many institutions, but due to Yeshiva's historically religious character, matters of this sort become more complicated. The complication, in this case, has disturbed not only students but administrators as well. One member of the Center for Professional Development, the branch of the administration that dealt with this particular issue directly understood the quandary that Dean Hirt described. This official concluded, however, that "the bottom line is if this were any other group being discriminated against, it would not have been tolerated."

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## Is Viagra Kosher?

### Yeshiva Students Attend Jewish Medical Ethics Conference

BY AYLON GLASER

On Sunday, November 1, students from Yeshiva College and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine attended a day-long conference entitled Judaism and Contemporary Medicine at the Marriot Marquis Hotel in midtown Manhattan. This 10th anniversary conference, run by the National Institute of Judaism and Medicine (NIJM), attracted over two hundred participants. The focus of the seminar, as stated in a letter sent to all participants, was to engage in the study and discussion "of ethical, moral, and legal dilemmas engendered by the 20th century scientific and medical advances."

Conference attendees included medical professionals, Torah scholars, medical students, premeds, students of practical halakha as well as other curious laymen and educated observers. Yeshiva students were invited to the gathering due to an alumnus donor that had secured several complementary spots on their behalf.

After a breakfast and welcoming from the associate director of the NJM, Dr. Yizhak Kupfer, participants were introduced to Dr. Mandel Ganchrow, YC alumnus and president of the Orthodox Union. His introductory remarks noted the widespread involvement of physicians and health professionals in Jewish communal leadership roles. He emphasized the proactive role that all Jewish professionals, and particularly doctors, must play as communal organizations expand to meet the needs of the next millennium.

Following those remarks, a plenary session of participants and speakers explored the moral, social, and traditional Jewish legal responsibilities of the patient and the physician. This included discussions involving the patient's legal and ethical duty to lead a healthy life, as well as the extent to which the Jewish community is responsible for those who fail to uphold their responsibilities. That session was led by Dr. Fred Rosner, a world-renowned authority on medical ethics, and Visiting Professor of Medicine at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. It also featured Dr. Velvel Greene, a professor of epidemiology and public health at Ben Gurion University in Israel, and Director of the Lord Jacobovitz Center for Jewish Medical Ethics at that institution.

The next phase of the conference featured four simultaneous sessions. Two of these sessions, however, garnered most of the attention. The first, entitled New Gene Technologies, was led by Dr. Leon Zacharowitz, a pediatric and adult neurologist at Nassau County Medical Center, and Yeshiva's own Rabbi Dr. Moses D. Tendler, a noted authority on medical ethics and its relationship to Jewish law. There, Rabbi Tendler reviewed many current uses of molecular genetic techniques and the social ramifications they present.

The other lecture dealt with organ donation and the division of scarce resources, that is, organ rationing. This session was led by Dr. Eli Friedman, a Distinguished Teaching Professor at the State University of New York - Health Sciences Center Brooklyn (Downstate), who established New York City's first hemodialysis center and renal transplant facility. Joining him was Rabbi Dr. Edward I. Reichman, an attending physician at the Montefiore Medical Center Emergency Department, and Assistant Professor of Epidemiology and Social Medicine at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. He is also an Adjunct Professor of Medical Ethics and Philosophy at Fordham University. Dr. Friedman presented the various concerns with organ donation as well as current statistics on the rate of donation. More importantly, he addressed how, practically, physicians deal with the glut of patients who effectively compete for what few resources are available for treatment. Dr. Reichman, a recent musmakh of RIETS, brought in a Jewish counterpoint, delving into the sensitive halakhic issues that arise with organ donation. Interestingly, that ses-

sion, which featured a number of current and former YU students, was the forum for an almost combative theological argument following the formal presentations.

The seminar's lunch session featured an address from the Honorable Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), United States Representative for New York's Eighth Congressional District. He spoke about his role in authoring legislation attempting to rein in HMO's, protect the availability of senior's health care, and to ensure women's access to preventative health services. In addition, Dr. Matthew Fink, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Beth Israel Medical Center spoke about his feelings on the direction health care will be taking in the near future. He maintained that it is necessary for us to realize that better health care, in the form of more effective treatments and scientific breakthroughs, does cost money. In order for the state of health care to improve, he argued, people must be willing to accept the cost of such quality care.

Following lunch, another series of simultaneous sessions was held, though one session far and away outdrew the others. The session was entitled, "Is Viagra Kosher? Sexual Function and Health." It was led by Rabbi Avraham Blumenkrantz of Far Rockaway, Dr. Judith Mishell, a clinical psychologist specializing in Jewish approaches to relationships and intimacy, and Dr. Jaclyn Landau Roberts, assistant professor of Ob/Gyn at Downstate. While Dr. Mishell reviewed the Jewish attitude towards intimacy in marriage and stressed its prominence in maintaining a meaningful relationship, Rabbi Blumenkrantz blew the crowd away. As a known kashrut authority, he opened by saying that, due to its traiff ingredients, Viagra is not Kosher. He maintained, however, that the pill may be taken in ways consonant with the Torah's perspective on marriage and intimacy. What followed was a highly specific presentation into the minutiae of married life, though he noted that one should consult his own Rabbi before applying his general principles to any specific case.

After the concurrent sessions had ended, all participants were given an enlightening look into the problems of guiding and protecting the children of Jewish communities. Exposure to drugs, violence, sexual abuse and alcohol highlighted the presentation. Mr. David Mandel, CEO of OHEL Children's Home and Family Services, spoke in very vivid terms of the problems children face in adjusting to the world they are growing up in. Many of the problems, he insisted, go on because the Jewish community either fails to notice them or refuses to admit them.

To end the conference, participants were treated to a heated debate regarding the future of managed care. This session was led by Dr. Eli Friedman, Rabbi Mattis Kantor, a fairly well known rabbi from Monsey, as well as an executive representing the Oxford Health Insurance Company. Rabbi Kantor emphasized the need for medical professionals, lawmakers, insurers, and patients to look beyond "the bottom line." He stated that since everyone claims to have the good of the patient in mind, it is necessary for them to ignore the monetary aspects of the health care debate and pursue a path which will enable them to deliver quality health care to everyone. Meanwhile, the representative from Oxford stressed the importance for doctors to correct their "rapacious" behavior as a solution to recent price increases. As a final word, Dr. Friedman reminded the crowd of Oxford executives' yearly salaries, which run in the millions of dollars.

The conference, well attended by a broad spectrum of interested individuals, focused its participants' attention on a number of concerns facing those in the medical profession today. Yehuda Burns, a YC senior who attended the conference, noted the "desire on of those attending to listen to the various points of view presented." He also noted, with pleasure, the strong YU attendance at the conference.

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## The Chain: A New Idea in Academic Advisement

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

In a new development designed to guide YU students through some of the hardships of college, Yossi Markowitz and Avi Oppenheim, juniors in SSSB and YC respectively, have initiated The Chain, a new and unique program which aims to provide YU students with help and academic advisement which was previously unavailable.

The focus of The Chain is twofold. One goal is to help students make informed decisions regarding course selection by giving the students an opportunity to hear a frank, unbiased opinion on professors, as well as providing information on course difficulty and requirements. The second goal is to assist students in planning a long term course schedule for the duration of the student's college stay. This includes strategically planning to schedule certain classes with others, knowing which courses will be available when, and pinpointing the best way to fulfill all the requirements in the least amount of time.

Often, due to insufficient advisement, students will find themselves in a course that does not address their needs. Though the academic advisement office does make efforts to help students find the right courses, many times this advice comes without sufficient insight regarding for what the student is looking. While some YU students strive for the most academically challenging and enriching courses, there are others who for various reasons are looking for easier courses which will enable them to graduate earlier.

However, students often cannot freely communicate these concerns to an academic advisor, who may frown upon the second mentioned outlook towards course selection. The academic advisors also do not have first-hand knowledge of how the professor teaches the course. In addition, it is largely thought that an academic advisor will be reluctant to advise against taking a university professor who frankly is not a top level teacher. Another factor which could weigh on academic advisors' recommendations is the need to fill empty seats in classes that are not overly populated.

The Chain, however, plans to provide course selection advisement in a manner that will eliminate these problems. This will be accomplished by organizing student mentors who are juniors or seniors in good standing for each major field of study. These mentors will have taken all the basic courses in that major, and will presumably have insight as to how the professor teaches and what he/she demands. It is hoped that these mentors will provide answers to questions that academic advisement may

not. The students will be able to discuss their concerns in a frank manner without the time pressure that exists in academic advisement. The student mentor, will in turn be friendly and easy to speak to, and will speak to the student candidly, and without a lack of time.

The founders of The Chain emphasized that they do not fault the university's academic advisement nor do they intend for The Chain to replace it. Instead, they suggested that The Chain will complement academic advisement and vice versa, as the academic advisement still provides the adult perspective, and presents objective advice.

One common misconception about The Chain is that it is a service designed to organize provide highly sought after mesorah to students. This idea probably originated as a result of the Chain's advertisement, which in Hebrew stated "shalshet hamesorah", or the chain of mesorah, meaning tradition. However, though the goal is not to distribute mesorah, the student mentors often will have mesorah in their fields of study if it is available, and will be more than willing to accommodate students looking for it.

The student mentors for each major will be available through phone or email to schedule meetings to advise students. Markowitz and Oppenheimer are still working on the technicalities of how to get the mentors numbers to students, with plans for a listing on the web in the works. They too will be available to students in need of finding the right kind of advisement. Guidelines will be sent out to all the mentors detailing questions they should ask the student in order to understand his needs and interests before advising.

Presently, there are student mentors arranged for almost all of the majors available at YU. Volunteers are still welcome in all majors, though there is still a specific need for volunteers majoring in Physics, Chemistry, MIS, Management, and History. Anyone interested is encouraged to call Avi at 781-0697, or Yossi at 795-7238.

The program is being sponsored by YCSC, as President Dror Barber thinks it is an excellent idea. "What YU students really need is advice from other students who have been in their shoes, and this provides just that," Barber said. The Chain was also highly endorsed by Andrew Leibowitz, Coordinator of Student Services for undergraduate men. It certainly seems like The Chain will add an improvement to the overall experience at YU. It was speculated that should it catch on here, a similar program in Stern would be formed too. As the founders emphasized, this program has a lot potential, but much will depend on the student mentors and how students respond to them.

## Writer's Block: YC Writing Center Tutors Attend Conference at Barnard

BY DAVID MIRSKY

Tutors from the Yeshiva College Writing Center recently had the opportunity to attend an inter-collegiate Writing Center conference at Barnard College. Among the other writing centers represented at the conference were those of Barnard, Stern College, and SUNY Stony Brook, which all participated in the four-hour conference on Sunday, November 8. Yeshiva College tutors were accompanied by YC Writing Center Director Dr. Lauren Fitzgerald and Assistant Director Steven Torres.

Asked prior to the event to devise topics for discussion at the conference, Yeshiva College tutors divided into groups to prepare to lead some of the panel discussions. The conference intended to expose tutors coming from diverse backgrounds to the unique aspects and techniques of other writing centers. Dividing the topics into hour-long panel sessions, each school had the opportunity to place several of their tutors panels dealing with the topics that they had prepared in advance. Participants waiting to present their panels had the chance to join other panel discussions that were going on in the various conference rooms.

Topics of discussion that were co-lead by YC tutors included: English-as-a-Second-Language tutoring, Roles in Tutor/Client and Tutor/Professor relationships, and Aspects of Gender Difference in Tutor/Client relationship. Other topics at the conference were the Problem of the Naive reader and Appropriate Tutor Reactions to Clients' Assigned Essays. Each college brought their own problems and experience unique to their respective writing centers to bear on

the panel discussions.

While panels were set up to lead discussion on the various topics, the floor was open to spontaneous and lively input pertinent to the issues at hand. David Helfgott, a YC tutor, commented on the nature of the discussions that ensued, saying that "it was a wonderful afternoon filled with much stimulating and insightful conversation," while reflecting on the overall success of the event as being one in which "new ideas, opinions, and perspectives were the main feature," and that the conference "will greatly enhance our effort in improving the YC Writing Center." YC students were able to open the eyes of other schools to unique problems that the writing center faces, such as the challenges that the standardized grammar test poses to the writing centers tutoring format. YC students also listened to and questioned the experiences of tutors from other colleges who are exposed to a wider range of writing styles and cultures.

After joining in hours of active panel sessions, tutors were treated to a meal, supplied by the Barnard Kosher Cafeteria, where they were able to chat with conference participants as a whole, sharing their insights gathered from the afternoon's events. Michael Samuels, a YC Tutor, concluded that the "Barnard conference was an enlightening experience because it forced us to focus on issues that are applicable to tutoring at all colleges, not just to tutoring at YC." Future inter-collegiate events such as these should help to ensure that YC students are continually opened to diverse opinions on certain issues, and that other colleges are in turn exposed to the distinct flavor of the Yeshiva College atmosphere.



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Baby, it's cold outside... and what better way to warm up than with a nice cup of tea? Don't laugh. Tea has been one of the most reliable wintertime tonics in the history of mankind. Students spend uncounted dollars on various tricks to perk up the mind and body, but they overlook the obvious and inexpensive. Traditional Chinese medicine recognizes that fine teas induce peace of mind, filter the bloodstream of foreign toxins, stimulate the pleasure centers of the brain through olfactory triggers and assist digestion. These are advantages that are too useful to pass up. And I'm not talking about sordid American teabags - Lipton can go take a flying leap. Avoid them like the Black Plague. I'm talking about the real thing - imported Asian broad-leaf loose teas. For thousands of years, tea has been known as an invigorating and reflective drink that fosters contemplation and resolve. As it is said, "One billion Chinese can't all be wrong."

First things first, there is only one tea - the tea bush.

Decoctions (beverages made by brewing vegetable matter in hot water) made with any part of any plant other than the tea tree are called infusions or tisanes. Most manufacturers of American "herbal teas" are either unaware of this, don't care, or are pandering to the common misconception because that is the brand name most people will recognize and therefore will buy. Although scented teas, that is drinks made from tea leaves that have been dried together with something else are often called by the name of their flavoring agent (i.e. rose tea, chrysanthemum tea, violet tea, etc.), there is a full complement of proper teas from which to choose.

True tea is made only from the three top-most leaves of the bush in its first two years of life and can only be picked by hand. It is widely believed to have originated in China, and only much later brought to India and Africa in the colonial period by the British.

Somewhere on the order of 90% of all tea drunk in China is green tea. There, it is nearly always drunk "dry" (unsweetened). Green tea leaves have not been exposed to the process called "sweating," that eventually causes them to turn black. Much like green and black olives, green and black teas are actually the same plant having received two different treatments. Where as black olives are ripe and green ones immature (the latter are treated with lye to preserve color and texture), green and black teas are picked at the same time, with the black being the result of having been subjected to a process of oxidation that greatly increases the caffeine content.

Like olives, there is a red variety. In olives, it comes from allowing the fruits to rot until they turn a purple-brown. In tea, it is a halfway stage between green and black - a partial oxidation - and results in a yellow-brown leaf. It produces a "liquor" (color of the brew) that is russet, hence the name. It is more commonly known by its Chinese name, Oolong. The best examples of this kind come from Taiwan and are called Formosa teas,

after the island's former name. It is the only variety of tea which they make better than their mainland counterparts.

There is a rare, fourth variety of tea - the white tea, called "The Emperor's Tea." I have never tasted it. It is so expensive and hard-to-get that I have yet to add it to my pantry. What I tell you about it comes from photo essays and written descriptions. It is made only from the topmost leaf of only the healthiest of species. The dry leaves are a pale ashen green in color with a cast of silvery grey on their surface. They are relatively weak and require a good handful to make a potent pot, further contributing to their high price. They are virtually without caffeine. This is truly a connoisseur's tea.

For the average student of Yeshiva University, I recommend Sunflower brand Jasmine tea as a good starter. The jasmine flower is considered a princely blossom. Its

delicate perfume is as exotic as it is exquisite, and compliments the tea splendidly. (The

world of pop psychology is all abuzz nowadays about the benefits of aromatherapy, while the Chinese were onto this trick millennia ago. Likewise, it is no accident that the Israeli *halutzim* planted fragrant plants all over their *altneustadt*. In a stressful environment, people need something to soothe their souls while they go about their daily business. Even the gruffest Sabra is placated without knowing it by having these sweet scents wafting up his hirsute nostrils as he walks the streets to his local *makolet*.) Another advantage of this tea is that it is brewed at relatively low temperatures - about the same as the tap water when you let the hot faucet run for a minute. Be warned though, that the water from your tap has a flavor all its own, and it ain't jasmine. Cold tap water is generally cleaner-tasting and can be heated up in your microwave oven.

Another popular additive to tea is whole, sliced ginseng. For those of you who have been paying through the nose for fancied-up ginseng-based products - chuck 'em in the trash! This is the real deal - chuck it in the teapot! The dried rhizome variety is as hard as stone and is sliced into small coins right there in front of you when you buy it (for a fraction of the cost of pharmaceuticals containing ginseng). This is done in a *keli meyuchad* (the slicing machine is usable for this purpose alone) so ask your *posek* if this acceptable for you. Throw it in at the start of brewing and when you've nearly finished the pot, eat them, and wash them down with the last few sips. They add a sweetish, woody note to the brew that's hard to describe.

Other embellished teas are "osmanthus," an expensive item that has a verdant taste mindful of shrubberies to it; the famous "Earl Grey," an unexceptional blend of black teas sprinkled with oil of bergamot - the pericarp of a citrus fruit closely related to the Seville orange; the Japanese "Genmai Cha," is green tea leaves blended with roasted brown rice and pearl barleys, resulting in that toasty fla-

## Fact, Not Opinion

BY DAVID RAPPAPORT

The answer to last issue's trivia question:

The singer on The Archies recording of Sugar, Sugar was dum ta dum ... Ron Dante. Congratulations and five dollars goes to Dan Rosen from MTA. According to a recent MOJO Magazine article, he did it for the money. Mad props my man!

Soon the holidays will be upon us. Christmas trees will be erected and the Lubavitcher Chasidim will counter-attack with Menorahs. So much for separation between church and state. Either way, the one thing I know is that there are a few gifts I really don't want this year (besides the new Furby toy). So without further ado:

The Top 10 Things I Do Not Want You to Buy Me This Year

1. **Spice Girls / Hanson Menorah.** One light for each member of both groups. Set their hearts afire for eight crazy nights. Derive extreme pleasure by burning Scary Spice each night! This gift is a must have for any three year old girl. Order now and you too can receive the limited edition Backstreet Boys wax candles. Help them because they're melting.

2. **John Lennon Soap-On-a-Rope.** The amazing possibilities of washing yourself each night with a piece of soap resembling the composer of "Imagine." Yoko Ono brought this thoughtful gift to us in tribute to her late husband's name. The beauty of this product is based on its multi-purpose usage. Think about it - after the soap is gone you are left with an extremely durable piece of rope. How utilitarian.

3. **Celine Dion Alarm Clock.** No more oversleeping past Rabbi Gorelik's Classical Jewish History class with this handy piece of technology. Will it wake you up? It will wake your roommate and your next-door neighbor with its high pitched shrill, just short of being audible only to dogs.

4. **Alice in Chains Live & Unplugged Rhythm Tracks.** Now you can be just like Creed and The Days of the New and use the same drums and bass that Alice in Chains recorded for their MTV show. Nothing beats

vor so common to Japanese cuisine. "Lapsang Souchong," or smoked tea, is a good medium in which to soak and rehydrate dried shiitake mushrooms before stir-frying them with soy and fish sauces. It is said that the old British Bulldog himself, Sir Winston Churchill was fond of this kind of tea with a shot of single-malt whiskey, a wink and a cigar.

(The only convenience store, ready-made iced tea I care for is Arizona's new 20 oz. glass bottle of "diet" green tea with ginseng, honey, plum juice and an OU certification. The plum juice makes all the difference.)

Favorite last-minute household additions for sugared, plain, black teas include "Mey Zohar" (distillate of bitter orange blossoms); "na'ana" - an Israeli variety of peppermint; and Chinese "Anistar" - a lovely brown eight-pointed desiccated fruit that imparts a strong and heady aroma of licorice. But the grand-daddy of them all is a sweet dessert drink of Anglo-Indian origin called "masala chai." It is made with a type called CTC leaf (Crush Tear Curl) tea, which is basically just ground black tea. I use the Ceylon Kandy variety. As promised in a previous install-

this original gift and it comes with a fifteen-minute guarantee. Order now and you may get the Hanson stopwatch. Comes with a fifteen-minute warranty.

5. **My Three Minutes Serving A Jack & Coke to Monica Lewinsky.** You too can now read the lovely tale of common stewardess Stacy Jordan and how she served a Jack & Coke to presidential playmate Monica Lewinsky. Only available in Hardback.

6. **The John Lennon Answering Machine Tapes.** The complete box sets of all of John Lennon's answering machine messages as brought to us by Mr. Lennon's thoughtful widow Yoko Ono. Thanks a lot. Imagine all the messages across the universe.

7. **Spice Girls Automatic Soap Dispenser.** Oops! You squeezed Baby Spice and now there's soap everywhere. Come clean with this product and I'm sure you won't be disappointed. Comes with a free packet of liquid ginger soap.

8. **The Teletubbles Pearl Engraved Pencil Sharpener.** Make school fun now and forever with four aliens with televisions for stomachs. Each time you stick a pencil in them they make their unique noises that apparently only two-year-olds and potheads understand. Personally, I just enjoy stabbing those little bastards over and over again. And we thought Barney was hell on earth.

9. **My Three Minutes Serving A Jack & Coke to the President, The Memoirs of Ms. Lewinsky.** By Linda Tripp. Oh just stop it already!

10. **My Three Minutes Serving a Jack & Coke to John Lennon.** By Yoko Ono. Now you're just being silly.

This Issue's Trivia Question is ...

The Who made their American TV Debut on the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour in 1967. Tommy Smothers introduced Keith Moon as the guy who plays the \_\_\_\_\_ Drums. Please fill in the blank.

This month's musical recommendation is Revolver by The Beatles. If you haven't bought this record up until this point in your life, you don't deserve to live. The Lord Almighty is a Beatles Fan. Trust me!

ment, here is the recipe: Place a healthy amount of the following twelve or fourteen dried, whole spices into a muslin sachet (small cheesecloth bag) and tie with kitchen twine or fishing line. Go heavy on the cardamom:

- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. black peppercorns | 2. ginger         |
| 3. cardamom          | 4. cloves         |
| 5. cinnamon          | 6. bay laurel     |
| 7. aniseed           | 8. saffron        |
| 9. mastic            | 10. allspice      |
| 11. rosepetals       | 12. mace          |
| and optionally:      |                   |
| 13. orange peel      | 14. vanilla speck |

Place the sachet in cool water and bring to a gentle simmer. Simmer for five minutes. Pour hot liquid into a waiting teapot, readied with tea already in a second sachet. Cover and let brew.

In a pitcher combine the following ingredients:

- |                        |                |
|------------------------|----------------|
| 1. dark brown sugar    | 2. heavy cream |
| 3. salt (a half-pinch) |                |

When tea is brewed, pour some into teacups along with the cream mixture and blend.

Until our next meal together, B'teavon!

## A Very Carlebach Weekend

BY ZEV STUB

Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach always said that he did not want to be eulogized after he would pass away. It is doubtful, though, that he could have imagined the lively atmosphere that would surround his *yahrtzeit* only a few years after he died. A celebration of spirituality, the affair was moving and uplifting and, one hopes, was "the way Shlomo would have liked it."

The remembrance of Shlomo and his music began on Wednesday night, the evening of the actual *yahrtzeit*, as a spontaneous gathering of students materialized around midnight in the Morg Lounge. Students sang tunes and told Shlomo stories in the darkened lounge, as others played guitars, harmonica, recorder and maracas in an impromptu jam session. One student lit a candle, as the crowd swelled to more than fifty students. The singing and rejoicing in memory of a musical Jew went on past three in the morning.

Yeshiva University was party central for the weekend festivities, drawing 330 students from colleges near and far to memorialize Reb Shlomo throughout a special *shabbat*, which featured the music and *chazanut* of Chaim Dovid, the Carlebach *chassid* and singer from Israel. The attendance broke records for a non-orientation *shabbaton*, and brought some unexpected constraints upon the Rubin Shul, which was packed to a fire-hazard-pushing brim. However, no one seemed to mind, as the dense gathering added to the intimate atmosphere of an experience that was positively stratospheric. *Davening* in the Carlebach *nusach* for *kabbalat shabbat*, Chaim Dovid got the *minyán* energized quickly with some familiar *niggunim* and a whole lot of dancing. Although some smiled apprehensively as they joined the dancing masses, most were quickly absorbed into the music and atmosphere surrounding them, and the circle eventually grew beyond the extent of the shul. Even many of the JSS *Minyan* regulars, who normally are anxious to be the first to be admitted to the cafeteria, admitted that the change was refreshing. Naftali Nadel, SSSB '00, noticed that "it was good to see that you could mix being able to be *misपाल*...with happiness." David Keesey, YC '00, agreed. "It was a very spiritually uplifting *shabbos*...something you very often don't get at YU." Although some were miffed that *davening* went so long, most agreed that the event was a nice change of pace.

After the meal, Chaim Dovid spoke at a *tish*, along with Rabbis Goldvicht, Simon, and Reichman. Chaim Dovid spoke softly, relating the experiences that led to a chance encounter with Reb Shlomo Carlebach at a Buddhist monastery. Chaim Dovid delved deeper into the importance of Reb Shlomo's music and its spirituality, and through the latter's music and personal influence, he gradually was able to evolve into the grizzly-bearded *Chassid* he is today. Other *rabbeim* added to Chaim Dovid's words, expanding on the significance music brings to religious spirituality.

Saturday night brought a chance to sample Chaim Dovid's own brand of soul music, in a *melava malka* concert sponsored by the Office of Student Services. The setting provided a relaxed atmosphere for students and faculty to get reacquainted with some Carlebach favorites. Students conceded that they "had just heard about [Chaim Dovid] for the first time when he came to YU," but afterwards were "quite impressed" with his music. Other students proclaimed, "Chaim Dovid rocks!" One student musician was impressed because he'd "never seen a frum Jew hold his guitar so low." Many of the students who stayed in for *shabbat* took advantage of this additional chance to dance in circles, while faculty and guests were, for the most part, content to listen and watch from the sidelines.

I must admit that the festivities at YU, although free, were not my first priority that night, as they took a back seat to another concert, this one given by Neshama Carlebach, Reb Shlomo's daughter. The Upper West Side event, heavily publicized, was sold out when I arrived 40 minutes late. Denied entrance, I found a side room, and sat with my friend and some other late-coming fans, making new acquaintances and dancing as Neshama's music carried through the doors to our private box seats. Later, as the concert began to peak, a bouncer allowed us to enter, perhaps stirred by our uncompromising determination to enjoy the show (or maybe he was just sick of us banging on the door.) In any case, the concert was outstanding on all accounts, as Neshama stayed true to her father's musical tradition while throwing in some surprises, including her own original songwriting attempt, and a heartfelt classic from 'the holy *rebbitzin*' Joni Mitchell. The crowd became immersed in the music, and danced with a sense of resolution; one felt that by dancing a little bit harder, he could bring Reb Shlomo back into the physical world. Although Reb Shlomo was not there in person, there was a sense that he was; as he may have predicted, his legacy, through his music, transcends physical boundaries and lives on.

## PLAY REVIEW

### Beauty and the Beast

BY STEVEN BERNSTEIN

When Howard Ashman said, "animation is the last place left to produce the Broadway musical," he wasn't kidding. The Disney films produced with Menken and Ashman at the helm have been very successful. This can be credited to the fact that they were produced in the style of a Broadway musical. In fact, *Beauty and the Beast* remains the only animated film ever to receive an Emmy nomination for Best Picture. It comes as no surprise then, that *Beauty and the Beast* would be the inaugural production to launch the theatrical branch of the Walt Disney Company.

There are many challenges included in the transformation of an animated film such as *Beauty and the Beast* into a stage play. One such obstacle was translating the enchanted objects, whose liveliness depends solely on animation, into actual living beings. From an actor's standpoint, this translation is fantastic. It is not uncommon for the actor to be required to bring humanistic qualities to animals. (The great success of *Cats* can attest to this.) However, to anthropomorphize an inanimate object is something entirely different. It is a concept that only could have been conceived in the mind of Howard Ashman (who, by the way, is also responsible for the jive-talking man-eating plant, Audrey II, from "Little Shop of Horrors"). This transformation was accomplished through great makeup and costumes as well as some pretty damn good dancing and acting. The costume design for this play was so fantastic that Disney had to procure a patent for an article of clothing worn by the character of Lumiere.

Another hurdle encountered in presenting this play was expanding a film whose length was an hour and half, into a full-length Broadway production. This proved to be no challenge for Disney. The original uncut ver-

sion of the film (due in theaters sometime next year) was actually longer and more involved than what was presented to the public. The film was cut to an hour-and-a-half so that the attention span deficient audience (children), at whom this film was aimed, would be able to follow along. All Disney had to do was plug in those numbers that were cut and - Viola!!

Since film and stage are two very different art forms there were some elements in the film that had to be cut entirely. For example, the Burklely-esque dance routines in "Be Our Guest" were unable to be reproduced on the stage, since this form of choreography requires points of view that can only be seen through the camera's lens. The choreography of the rest of the show, however, more than makes up for this one small defect. For example, in the "Gaston" number the choreographer synchronized the clinking of beer glasses to not only fit in really nicely with the dance, but to also add a little spice to the musical aspect of the number. Choreography similar to that in *Cats* was used to give actors an animal-like quality when portraying wolves and beasts.

In this review I have discussed some of the many challenges encountered in adapting a film into a Broadway production and how Disney overcame them. However, the most difficult task in an endeavor such as this is avoiding reproducing the original work. Aside from nostalgia, there must be a reason for an audience who has seen the film to come see the play. The film and the play must each have their own unique qualities. *Beauty and the Beast* is such a magnificent play because Disney succeeded in creating a new entity. The film and the play are two entirely different beasts (pun intended).

*Beauty and the Beast* can be seen at the Palace Theater, 1569 Broadway (at 47th St.) For Ticket information, call: 307-4100

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FILM REVIEW

**Apt Pupil**

BY YAIR OPPENHEIM

Starring Ian McKellen  
and Brad Renfro

Apt Pupil, based on a novelette written by Stephen King (in his book *Different Seasons*) is a pure study in the root and nature of evil. Brad Renfro plays the bright teen Todd Bowden, who in the sharply edited opening montage, discovers a Nazi war criminal living incognito in his neighborhood under the alias of Arthur Denker. Instead of cashing in on that knowledge and becoming a hero, he decides to strike a deal: Arthur won't be turned in to the authorities on the condition that he retell Todd stories of the horrors he committed during the war. The plot soon becomes "story hour" gone wrong. Todd begins to compulsively visit Denker and the evils are reawakened. Coating the rest of the film is a theme of manipulation between Denker and Bowden: who is truly the cat, and who the mouse?

The plot never needs to shift into high gear as its style is subtlety. Scenes are sewn into each other to show Todd's slow, yet powerful transformation. What is unclear in the film as well as the novel is as to why Todd is so obsessed with the Nazis and their atrocities to begin with. It is not dwelled upon, nor is the more important question as to how this seed grew and sprouted in the first place.

Ian McKellen's performance is staggering. Most audiences may see his acting as decent for the role, but if they knew that he was a British actor and a veteran Shakespeare performer, they would be duly impressed. The accent and the mannerisms are perfect. He transcends his own personality and exists in that character, one of the highest forms of acting. This is not McKellen playing a Nazi, rather a Nazi, as portrayed by McKellen. The last noteworthy performance of this type in a mainstream film was by Danny Glover in *Beloved*. Brad Renfro's performance as a teen of the 1980's was standard, yet not generic, due to the decent script.

What sets this film apart from others is the attention paid to the overall craftsmanship of the film. The film was crisply edited; there was not one extraneous shot or scene. Credit is due to John Ottman's talents, as he not only produced the film, but composed the score and edited the final cut. This being only his second film director Brian Singer has apparently shown that most of his directorial touches are unseen. Rather, they are felt. Time is spent on character development and imagery (the foreboding clouds during Todd's graduation speech were a nice touch), and the pacing is right. Note that the film did not achieve any breakthrough or innovation. Rather, Singer (and Ottman), as done in *The Usual Suspects* (their previous collaboration), worked on removing possible awkwardness, and designed the film to be a taut and powerful piece.

With regard to the film dealing with Nazism as subject matter, the film does not hesitate to describe typical gas chamber horrors. The word "Jew" isn't uttered or mentioned until the end of the film. It should not be meant as an insult; the film expects the audience to be familiar with the subject matter. The film does not try to answer the questions posed by what was done, as that should be left to survivors to tell and for textbooks to document. It does, however, look to answer the question of why evil is so appealing. After Todd gets absorbed by it, the stance is that it could have happened to anyone, as evil exists in all forms and all eras.

**American History X**

BY YAIR OPPENHEIM

Starring Edward Norton  
and Edward Furlong

Things aren't as simple as black and white. This is the lesson that Edward

Norton learns in the remarkable film about Neo-Nazis, titled "American History X," based on the book by David McKenna. Edward Norton stars as Derek Vinyard, a young, brilliant product of a middle class home, who after committing a vicious racial crime, is imprisoned. Upon returning from prison, Derek has reformed, and is soon worried about his younger brother Danny (played by Edward Furlong) who still idolizes the image of what a great Neo-Nazi his brother used to be. Derek only has a matter of time to deal with old ghosts that reappear, change his brother's ways, and explain how he has become a better person.

The film presents the issue of who one is committing evil against, compared to the why, which is answered by the aforementioned *Apt Pupil*. It shows the rise of crime in LA, and explains how certain white people use this to rationalize the creation of a white "youth group," being manipulated by a shady, yet educated leader.

Edward Norton's performance is electrifying; he is absolutely magnetic in his portrayal of a reformed Neo-Nazi. His real-life personality (along with his acting style) can classify him as the next Robert De Niro. Those who don't believe this should watch him in "Primal Fear" and "The People Vs. Larry Flynt;" great showcases of his versatility. Not only does he apply method acting to his role, he absorbs himself in it and throughout all of the film, even though his character shifts are polar opposites of one another, manages to retain the same intensity and conviction which attract the viewer. The way in which he propels the film is quite necessary as his change in belief needs to be convincing. He changes from antagonist to protagonist. As for the other cast members, Edward Furlong is simply there for an image. He emits the presence of someone who looks and feels like Derek's brother, yet, he still has no depth,

even after acting in "Terminator 2." Avery Brooks is notable as Derek's principal and mentor, as is Elliot Gould as Derek's mother's Jewish boyfriend.

Prior to the film's release, there was controversy over the cut of the film. The director, Tony Kaye, was at odds with the studio (New Line Cinema) over which edited version was better. It seems, that whichever version was shown, it showed no sloppiness in editing. The film is far from disjointed. What may, in some opinions make it suffer is the overly stylized feel of the film. It is one thing to show black and white footage as a form of flashback; it not only removes confusion, but provides a sort of allegory—everything in the past was seen by Derek in black and white, whereas the present is in color.

To mention the excessive use of style, there were numerous shots done in slow motion, that were absolutely irrelevant, and seemed only there to showcase the director's talent as a cinematographer. Would you care about water droplets falling in slow motion from a shower-head?

The film as a whole deals quite well with the subject matter, even though it is forced to focus on a particular type of story. Most of the details handling the issue are seen in flashbacks, which "highlight" Derek's illustrious, yet short career as a Neo-Nazi. One particular notable scene is a lunch discussion at the Vinyard home, which has Derek erupt into a diatribe about the issues surrounding Rodney King and the LA riots. Norton is so good at conveying the issue, thanks to an superb script by the book's author, that his intelligence can sway the audience to his belief. What changes him, is a realization, one that is the answer to anyone's belief that hate is right: Whether you are right or wrong, can you name one good thing that results?

FOOD REVIEW

BY AVRUMIE KAHN

A wise man once said, "Some people live to eat, while others eat to live." Eating is a funny thing; we all do it every day and each of us has a particular food of interest. All (kosher) foods are of particular interest to me. Some maybe more than others, but I have extensive experience across the board. When I was told of the *Wolf & Lamb Steakhouse*, a new restaurant that has just opened up, I immediately called Information for their phone number because of my carnivorous instincts.

Upon entering the restaurant on 48th between Madison and 5th, I noticed few people dining in what was a long dim lighted room with a high ceiling and a country atmosphere. I was seated and handed a menu with the *hashgacha* of the OK. The table was set plainly with CLEAN silverware and glasses, a basket of rolls which must have been sitting out all day, and a pitcher of ice water ready to be poured.

I started my meal with a cup of the "soup of the day," cream of zucchini, which was sprinkled with garlic croutons and sprouts. It was just the right texture, which isn't easy when making a soup like this.

Now for the main entrée. The top of the list was a 24 oz. steak, the pride of the establishment. (It better have been for the price they charged.) I ordered it immediately, but knowing it takes quite an amount of time to grill a steak of that size, I decided to order some appetizers. I ended up ordering a side of chopped liver and some crispy chicken fingers. The liver was served on an oval plate and was flanked on each side with a scoop of egg-salad and a scoop of coleslaw. I wondered why it was served this way, until I tasted the liver plain.

The whole idea is to dilute a little of the liver flavor with the egg salad, (and believe me it needed it). The chicken fingers were served on a circular plate with a mayonnaise-and-dill dip planted in the middle. Fresh lemon wedges provided a pleasing look to the array. I found the chicken with the dip, along with some lemon a great combination.

Finally the moment I was waiting for - I was served my STEAK on the bone (also available off the bone) with a side order of string fries. The steak was served with lettuce, tomato and onion, which I asked the waiter to throw on the grill for me as well. The steak tasted great, however, let's face it, how bad can a 24 oz. piece of meat thrown on a grill taste? It did lack a little flavor, and the restaurant, not having a variety of sauces (such as Tabasco) didn't help much either. All they had was A1 or ketchup. Let me remind you that it was still a 24 oz. steak, and hey! A steak is a steak. Still, I can't decide which part I enjoyed more, staring and smelling it when it was placed in front of me, devouring it, or pushing my chair back a few inches and looking at the monstrous bone lying on my plate.

I did mention earlier that the steak alone cost a pretty penny, but there were plenty of other dishes on the menu that were reasonably priced. This hearty 24 oz.'er is not for your everyday take-out. I feel it is something that is great for a birthday, another special occasion, or for you steak-lovers out there.

I ended the meal with a slice of cake, which was your average restaurant cake. The waiter told me I was getting a walnut cake with caramel; instead, it turned out to be mocha.

In general, I recommend the *Wolf & Lamb Steakhouse* for anyone who is looking for a quiet, relaxing place to eat offering plenty of meat and in-

**Carnivores Only!**

the Midtown area. Although I wouldn't call it a family restaurant, there is still plenty of food on the menu that would be perfect for any age.

Here is my rating chart:

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
*	**	***	****

Ratings reflect my personal reaction to food, ambiance, and service with price taken into consideration. (Prices subject to change.)

*Wolf & Lamb Steakhouse*

\*\*\*

**ATMOSPHERE:** The main dining room is fairly large, and there is plenty of space between tables for privacy or to get up and walk around without disrupting or bumping into anybody. Wooden floors and wooden chairs (comfortable) with brick walls and scattered checkered tablecloths give a nice country/home feeling. It was, as I noted, clean.

**SERVICE:** Helpful and very polite, but it would help if the waiters knew more about the food on the menu.

**SOUND LEVEL:** Thanks to high ceiling, it holds noise levels down, however I was present when there were only a few customers there. There was pleasant music with no lyrics being played in the background.

**TASTE OF FOOD:** I have to admit that food was merely simple tasting. Nothing stuck out with a unique flavor to grab the taste buds, but that isn't necessarily a bad thing.

**PRICES:** Unless it's your B-Day and you order the 24 oz. HEARTY STEAK, you'll find that the prices are extremely reasonable considering quality and quantity.

**CREDIT CARDS:** All major credit cards excepted.  
**WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBILITY:** Very accessible, only one floor...

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# ARTS & CULTURE

## POEMS

BY  
YAAKOV ALEXANDER

### JAZZ

the jazz of it all  
the dark room so alight  
sightless colors constellation bright  
there it is  
the jazz of it all  
silly candles flicker  
in time to the unnerving rhythm  
pinkie finger tapping worn wood  
aloof musicians standoffish bass  
secretly smile and joke  
empowered this evening  
with the jazz of it all  
creeping into minds  
alchemists at large  
as brass turns to gold  
there it is - the realization  
born anew soon to die  
this evening of jazz

### HIBERNATION

poems are  
a wake of emotion  
rippling and resounding  
still far from its source

those scenes which end and fade  
are lost and gasping  
for their former status  
yearning for those moments of creation  
forgotten  
as to not obstruct those parts of life  
which are not for the living  
joy must be contained  
for it threatens and intrudes

the open road  
the break  
is an aphrodisiac which wears off  
and leaves you unrecognizable to yourself  
full of mystical admiration  
for a foggy memory of an endless night  
and the romance of all begins to engulf  
but.... the phone rings  
and the mirror, alas, does not lie

as you fight the current  
waves crash against you  
the edges of passion  
erode and drawn  
the ocean of life  
smothers the flame  
rusts the body  
and buries the soul  
the eyes like a barren womb  
see only tundra

the joys tremble in their hibernation  
remember the past  
and await their rebirth

### SUBWAY

never noticed lines  
on back of knees  
exist  
unnamed and little regarded  
fleeting accidental tiny touch  
mixed with accent  
and a tad of vanilla  
glanced up over book  
pencil outlined eyebrows  
train sparks  
and bit of overheard talk  
painted faces fingers and toes  
protrude from sandals  
and point indiscriminately  
there mother earth is imprisoned  
in cliché images  
of countless brooding poets  
mesmerized by the ceaseless  
motion and migration  
in the tunnels of no time

### COLORS

there are colors  
and forms  
and movements  
  
slow and gravity  
shape sudden curl  
of lip or hair  
in silent grace  
  
there are minutes  
infinitely remembered  
yet never recalled  
always touching when there is no touch  
incarcerating tears  
within the mind's eye

there is a rift  
which runs symmetrically  
through man's soul  
a testimony to a union  
a symptom of rejection  
between redemption  
and a rock

of pores  
which breath and sweat  
and dry and die  
in reaction to emotions  
and circumstances  
from a far creating beauty  
from up close exuding life  
of colors  
forms  
and lazy movements

## LITERARY

*The following work is the prologue to  
The Ghetto Theatre,  
a novel-in-progress by YC/IBC Junior  
Aaron Klein.*

The set. A memory encased theatre, lavishly decorated and royally fixed, splendid and mysterious in all its grandeur. Eight hundred seats occupy the ravishing expanse that is the Shottenburgh, the smallest of all Broadway theatres. Everything about it is extraordinary and strange. Some sections of the theatre are overdone, and others look as though they are not completely finished. A large and eccentric Michelangelo-style painting adorns the high ceiling. Royal red carpet laced with dancing white streaks runs throughout the theatre, and is accented by golden posts and sculptures that were born to create a look that seems haunting, almost surreal.

The beautiful dark green curtains are closed, all stage lights are out, and the work lights are dimmed. Hidden behind the curtains is a three piece wooden stage. Not a sound can be heard as the silence begins to take on a life of its own.

I sit in the last row of seats at the very top section of the theatre. This room evokes a collage of ambivalent memories that are at once painful and contented. I do not wish to recall any of them. I tried to suppress them for as long as possible, but they remained hidden in the background, garnering strength from my senility and planning their horrible and insurmountable revenge. All at once I could feel it surfacing like a terror-ridden thunderstorm approaching the beach, silently at first, but about to explode into a forceful and deadly hurricane of lost events.

I had remained silent for far too long, and it was slowly beginning to destroy me. The cast and crew had unknowingly pledged their secrecy by the signing of long and technically painted contracts. I must now violate these written laws, if not for the rest of the cast then for my own sanity.

My legs are resting on the seat in front of

me. My breathing has slowed, and I can feel the past swiftly approaching for its final curtain bow. If I only knew what that year had in store for me. It was a year that fate and luck had collided harshly, and brought me stumbling to a destiny that I always dreamed of, but knew nothing about. I would walk through the gates of Hell and be killed once a night. I would sing the tunes of Gershwin and receive a standing ovation each and every time. I would learn the secrets of the dark, and its power would haunt me forever.

I look down at the stage; the curtain is still closed and all is silent. My heart jolts when I see it. The glimmer lasts only a few seconds, but it's enough time to see the shiny top hats being waved under the bright yellow stage lights. We were dancing and smiling and kicking for all we were worth. Then the scene fades, and the green curtain and dimmed lights return.

I sit erect and don't want to look at the stage for fear of the next act. But I need to look. After gathering enough strength, I slip back down in my seat and look up to see the silky green curtains melt away into exanimate darkness.

The work lights come on at full blast and my pupils quickly react. The curtains, which are open, are made of canvas and look fake. They are painted red in the center, the color tapering off to blue on both sides. The stage now seems outrageously out of place, it's made from wood and painted black, an exact replica of the Meidim Theatre in the Vilna Ghetto.

My memory spins wild, my mind running through a blitzkrieg of indescribable thoughts and emotions. I can see silhouettes changing into lively figures. They are taking their place for the last performance. Then I sit up again and the figures disappear, but they will return. I know that the only way to heal is to go back, but I don't want to remember. No. I try to fight it. I cannot go back. As the figures slowly return, I realize it is too late.

The silence has been broken.

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# Yeshiva Chess Aficionados Organize Team for Intercollegiate Competitions

BY OVADYA ARYEH

In one of the latest manifestations of Yeshiva University's rise to the elite tier of universities, students have organized a chess team at Yeshiva College. Founded by Josh Rosman (YC, '01), and led by Rosman and Yakov Fleischmann (YC, '01), the chess team was launched on Tuesday, November 17 with an inaugural meeting.

The chess team is a subdivision of the chess club. The club is open to all YC students. It will serve as the starting point for all prospective chess team members.

Although the team will not participate in the current intercollegiate chess league, as matches are only played on Saturdays, there are plans to play competitively against chess team members of other schools. Currently, matches are scheduled against various universities in the New York area, including Columbia University, Stern College for Women, and Queens College. The intent is to arrange as many matches as possible. The ultimate goal of YC chess pioneers is to organize an intercollegiate chess league, which would only host matches on Sunday afternoons. Furthermore, this league would be distinguished from its counterparts since matches in the Sunday league would be played in an over-the-table format, as opposed to the current chess league which plays over the Internet.

The YC Chess Team already holds membership status in the United States Chess Federation, the largest and most popular chess organization in the country. This enables it to conduct official tournaments,

and allows the team to be included within the nationally recognized ranking system set by the Federation. In preparation for competition, the team has acquired state of the art equipment, including a special computer program, which will be used to hone team members' skills.

Although forming a brand new team is a daunting task, Rosman has some experience in the field. While at the Yeshiva University's high school for boys, MTA, he was involved in the organization of its chess team. As a senior on the team Rosman boasted an impressive 27-11 record, remaining undefeated in his individual matches that year. Rosman, who serves as co-captain of the team, declared that it had been one of his dreams to start a chess team in Yeshiva College ever since he was in 8th grade, when he learned how to play the game. While discussing his new venture, Rosman exclaimed, "I am ecstatic that my dream is now coming to fruition."

Joining Rosman at the co-captain position is Fleischmann, a seasoned chess maven. His experience includes service as the captain of Torah Academy of Bergen County's chess team for two years where he led them to the Yeshiva High School Chess Finals. "Chess circumvents the barriers of communication commonly faced by people from different countries," he explained. "I hope that, in addition to winning, members of the team will form long-lasting friendships, as common ground between them will be found."

For further information on the chess team, Josh suggests that you send an email expressing your interest to: josh89@aol.com.

# Nobel Laureate Herschbach Delivers Annual Kukin Chemistry Lecture

BY MATTHEW SCHARF

On October 28, Yeshiva students heard Nobel Laureate Dr. Dudley Herschbach deliver this year's installment of the annual Ira Kukin lecture series. The talk, entitled "The Impossible Takes a Little Longer," focused on the wonders of the fascinating human endeavor referred to as science.

Every year, the Kukin lecture series features a distinguished chemist who generally delivers a lecture geared specifically toward the undergraduate crowd. Dr. Ira Kukin, vice-chairman of Yeshiva University's Board of Trustees and prominent industrialist and chemist, is the sponsor for whom it is named.

Dr. Herschbach is the Frank B. Baird, Jr. Professor of Science at Harvard University and the recipient of the 1986 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his contribution to the understanding of how molecules react when they collide. He has published more than 350 research papers. His current research is devoted to molecular beam studies of reaction stereodynamics, intermolecular forces in liquids, and a dimensional scaling approach to electronic structure. In addition, he is a dedicated teacher whose general chemistry course is one of the most popular undergraduate

offerings at Harvard.

Herschbach hosted the chemistry segment of the PBS television series *The Nobel Legacy*, and participated in a live television program in Tokyo. He is well known beyond scientific circles for his eagerness and ability to translate science into laymen's terms. His message to all his audiences is that science is simple, rewarding, and fun.

During his address to Yeshiva students and faculty, Herschbach tended to discuss the process of science rather than his particular field of expertise. He sought to counter many commonly held notions by emphasizing the sheer simplicity and joy of science.

He discussed the nature of scientific exploration and discovery. His message was to begin scientific exploration by trying one thing. He advised aspiring scientists not to be discouraged if the first attempt doesn't work. Try something else; nature will still be there, waiting patiently.

The speech, was held in Weissberg Commons and was well attended, with students and faculty alike enjoying the lecture. One attendee declared, "It was an honor to be in the audience of someone of Dr. Herschbach's stature within the world of science." He added, "I found the substance of his message to be interesting and inspiring."

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## ticket info:

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## Computer Security Failings

*continued from page 1*

lected by the end of the day may include hundreds of ymail user names and passwords, credit card and social security numbers typed into the computer, emails, and private messages sent from that computer.

A student who has ordered a book from Amazon.com while sitting at a library computer has contributed his credit card number to the pool of information that can be collected. Another student might be using telnet to access his email account. His/her user name and password now belong to the student malevolently collecting data.

A student's email account may be, indeed has been, used to send threatening messages to professors without the knowledge of the account bearer. A user's password can be changed, removing his/her ability to access his account again.

A student who uses a University computer to manage a stock portfolio over the web may have contributed his access privileges to a hacker. The next day, when he/she checks on his/her portfolio, he/she may find that his forty stocks in Microsoft have been sold and stocks in a loser company purchased in its stead.

Other than keystroke recorders, several instances of people installing programs on YU computers that will later allow them to take over control of that computer have been reported. These programs allow this application even from the privacy of their own dorm room. These programs also run unnoticed, and can be both disturbing to computer users as well as an invasion of privacy.

There are many other problems with YU's system that arise from students' free access to install software on the individual computers. Students can install massive programs which paralyze the computer on which they have been installed. Many times this is done without harmful intent, but without knowledge of the possible consequences — namely disabled, out-of-order computers.

Also, MIS has no control over the amount of computers in the library that offer America Online (AOL). If MIS wished to leave a few com-

puters exclusively for web research, they would not be able to, because any student could simply install AOL on his own and chat away for hours.

Often, students change printers and screen settings and render these hardware items unusable by students who use these subsequently. In addition, an angry student who decides to delete Microsoft Word, or any other vital software program, from a computer may do so easily. Additionally, all information stored by students is left open for all to access. If a student has been working on a resume, he/she has no personal space to store his file other than a floppy disk. If he/she saves it on the computer's hard drive, it may be opened and read by anybody.

### The Cause

The cause of this problem is Yeshiva's use of a system that allows users to anonymously sit down at any YU computer and have full ability to change anything on that computer, including downloading and installing their own programs.

Since a valid ID is not required to use the computers, anyone can do anything to a YU computer with impunity. And since users have no personal storage space in which to save their work and install new programs, they have no choice but to do everything on the computers used by the entire student body. Of course, with no personal responsibility for what a user does to a computer, the potential for wrongdoing is obvious.

### The Solution

A login/password screen at every computer is standard procedure at both schools with which *The Commentator* spoke. This means that any student who wants to use a school-owned computer must first enter his/her name and password, similar to the way one logs in to the ymail email system to check his mail. While this practice is standard at NYU and Rutgers, it is not used at all at Yeshiva.

As mentioned earlier, some of the problems associated with the computers come from programs downloaded without authorization. These problems can be difficult to address. Both George Sullivan, Assistant Director of Yeshiva MIS, and the NYU official agreed that, "it is very hard to

strike a balance between functionality and security." Due to the fact that some computer rooms in YU double as classrooms, a PC lockdown might impede the efforts of some professors for certain classes.

In order to make some effort to ensure that computers have only the software approved for use by MIS, YU has purchased software, called LabExpert, that on a nightly basis refreshes the computer to its original configuration. Since this program is only run at night, it is entirely possible to download a keystroke recorder, use it for one day, and have it removed by LabExpert. One way to fight this is to require a login and password to log on to the computer. Although such a measure would not eliminate all security concerns, it would greatly reduce them.

The way the login system would work is as follows: When a user sits down at a computer, he/she would enter his/her personal user name and password. After doing this, the user would change his desktop settings, program options, printer settings, etc. without affecting the computer usage of others. All these settings would be stored on something called a "home directory," which is personal storage space, accessible only to its owner, but from any computer on the network.

Thus, users would be able to save their work permanently in their home directories, rather than relying on the current temporary storage solution. This would also solve the problem of the keystroke recorder, since, even if a malicious user downloaded and installed a keystroke recorder, it would only affect his own usage of that computer. When the next user sits down at the same computer, he/she would log in with his/her own user name, and thus not be affected by the program installed by the previous user.

### The Response

The RFC (Request For Comment) system, referred to as the "Talmud of the Internet" by one computer guru, is one in which laws are set based on the issues of the time. There are RFC's on everything from how to run a server to how to build a network to what configurations certain emails must have. RFC #1173 forbids unauthorized access to the Internet without a login and password — exactly what we have at YU — so that if something harmful is done, the owners of the server can find out who did it. Regardless of the RFC, a login/password screen, according to MIS

officials at NYU and Rutgers, simply makes sense for all those concerned due to the heightened level of security it affords the users of the network.

Asked why YU does not have logins and password screens at all terminals, Sullivan said, "It is something we have discussed in the past, and are sure to discuss again, but there are manageability issues involved. It is certainly doable but it is a lot of work to create logins and passwords for every user and then maintain them." In response to this statement, the NYU official agreed, to an extent. "Manageability is certainly an issue, and it is a lot of work to create and maintain logins and passwords. The system can be onerous at times but even with all these issues, it is absolutely worth it because of security."

Ronald Thornton, a computer technician at Rutgers, agreed. "Every user is issued a login and password to make sure they are a current student or employee. We would not do it any other way."

In addition to the discrepancies in security between Yeshiva and other universities, YU also lags far behind the other universities *The Commentator* contacted in the number of technicians and help staff it employs. The official from NYU compared a university computer lab to a garden. Much like in a garden where one cannot just put seeds there and expect them to grow, one cannot just put computers in a room and expect them to work properly. "It is not enough to just buy hardware and software and plug the machines in. They need constant care and looking-after," he said.

Apparently, MIS at YU has yet to grasp this principle. The NYU official simply laughed when told that YU has one roving technician per shift assigned to monitor several hundred student computers. Although the main technician is in the library much of the day, that does not do much for the students in the computer rooms in Belfer Hall where there are frequently as many as ten to fifteen computers down at one time.

*The Commentator's* sources agreed that YU simply does not provide the most basic measures that most other universities provide in order to ensure system security and stability. Many possible solutions exist, including login/password screens, overall network security, and staff upgrades. The YU MIS department simply has not implemented them.

## CAMPUS BULLETIN BOARD

**CAMPUS BULLETIN BOARD**  
SOY Food and clothing drive for victims of hurricane Mitch — Bins have been placed in the lobbies of all the dorms and will be out until Nov. 23. Please contribute clothing, and wrapped non-perishable foods. Any questions, please contact Yonatan Kaganoff at: 543-3951 or [ykaganof@ymail.yu.edu](mailto:ykaganof@ymail.yu.edu).

Morg Mart — Chinese night every Wednesday! Open from 8pm-2am every Sunday through Wednesday in the corner of the Morg basement lounge.

Shabbat Enhancement Committee — Ohr Yerushalayim Shabbaton with Rabbi Moshe Sosevsky, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Ohr

Yerushalayim in Israel. Junior Class trip to a taping of Late Night with David Letterman — Thursday Dec. 10, 5:30PM. Info, contact Dov Brandstatter: 740-1413. Chabad Club — Annual Shabbaton in Crown Heights, Shabbat Parshat Vayeshev, Dec. 5. To reserve please contact Yosef at 568-0012 or Shlomo at 782-2250.

YCDS — The Dramatics Society announces its Fall production, "Lord of the Flies." Saturday through Thursday, Dec. 12-17. For ticket info call Aaron Zeryieker@781-0364.

Annual YCSC Channukah Concert Extravaganza starring Avraham Fried and "Yachad" on Thursday, December 17, at 8 PM in Lamport Auditorium.

For info and tickets contact Yehuda Burns@740-3219.

YCSC invites all students to join one of the various student council committees. You can pick up an application from Dror Barber (Mo 222) or Howie Mazin (Mo 202).

BLOOD DRIVE — The next drive is scheduled for December 23-24. For information contact Nachum Stollman at 543-4725.

A Torah Tapes Library is now open and fully operational. Hundreds of titles on all topics from notable rabbis are now available. Full inventory catalogue online at <http://clubs.yucs.org/soy/tapes>

TANAKH JOURNAL —

Announcing the inaugural issue of the Yeshiva College Tanakh Journal. All students in YC, SCW, RIETS and BRGS, are encouraged to submit articles on a topic, theme, or parshanut issue related to tanakh. Please contact Ari Mermelstein @ 740-1269 or [mermels@ymail.yu.edu](mailto:mermels@ymail.yu.edu) for more information. Deadline: December 5th.

Volunteers are needed to visit children in New York City hospitals. Please contact Joseph Weilgus at 740-8660.

ER — The ER club invites all students to weekly meetings, every Thursday at 10:00pm in the Morg Lounge.

Israel Club — Volunteers needed to work on new web

site. Contact Hadar Weiss@781-3280. Chabad Club, Tanya Chabura Every Monday at 8:30pm in the Rubin Shul.

If you are an advanced chess player and would like to join the YU Chess Team, email Josh Rosman: [josh89@aol.com](mailto:josh89@aol.com).

The Snyder's Pretzel Chaburah Continues...every Wednesday night at 10:30pm across from the Main Beis Medrash, starring R' Daniel Feldman.

Attention Club Presidents: Planning an event? Have a special announcement? Please direct call necessary info to: [commie@ymail.yu.edu](mailto:commie@ymail.yu.edu)

## YU Professor Publishes Book on his Efforts to Rescue Yemenite Jews

### Tawil and Miodownik Recount Harrowing Tale



BY ARI MERMELSTEIN

There are close to one thousand Yemenite Jews living in Israel who feel that they are indebted to Dr. Hayim Tawil. Tawil, professor of Hebrew studies at Yeshiva College, has earned this gratitude; after all, he played an important role in rescuing the last vestiges of the Yemenite Jewish community. His new book, written primarily by RIETS student and former *Commentator* News Editor Steven Miodownik, entitled *Operation Esther: Opening the Door for the Last Jews of Yemen*, recounts the dramatic events surrounding the rescue mission, the details of which have until now been necessarily concealed from the public.

Tawil's diplomatic efforts began with a phone call in 1989 from a transplanted Yemenite Jew concerned about the welfare of his relatives in Yemen with whom he had lost all contact. The Yemenite Israeli, David Shuker, informed Tawil that he was spearheading a movement devoted to the restoration of the privileges then denied the Jews of Yemen. Tawil, an Israeli of Yemenite descent (Tawil's grandparents emigrated from Yemen to Israel in 1899) whose background made him an attractive candidate to head the fledgling organization, concedes that he was surprised. "I didn't even know there were Jews still living in Yemen. I thought that they had all left with Operation Magic Carpet," a rescue mission in which 50,000 Yemenite Jews were airlifted to Israel between 1949-1952. In fact, he discovered that in 1962, in the wake of a civil war in Yemen, the opportunity for unrestricted movement by Yemenite Jews ceased with the rise to power of an ultra-nationalist government. Equally as repressive, the government subsequently forbade the Jews from even communicating with the outside world.

Tawil was asked to chair the organization, dubbed ICROJOY (International Committee for the Revival of the Jews of Yemen), a group whose ambition was to obtain passports for the remaining 1200 Jews left in Yemen. Although flattered, Tawil was nonetheless ambivalent about accepting the post in light of his inexperience at organizational work. However, informed of the severe political restrictions imposed on the Yemeni Jewish community, Tawil reconsidered. Horrified by the injustices perpetrated on that community by the ruling government, he consented to oversee the mission.

A novice at the game of international politics, Tawil credits the students of YU with much of his early success. He initiated a massive letter and petition writing campaign in which he utilized a student body eager to assist the Yemenite Jews in their plight, and his efforts ultimately proved successful. Three months later, he received a call from Richard Schifter, then Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. Schifter admitted that the incessant letter writing had achieved its desired effect. He was willing to meet with Tawil and his colleagues, and in return asked that Tawil stop bombarding him with mail.

The State Department thought that the normal diplomatic process would not prove to be effective in this particular case. Under mounting pressure from the Arab league, the Yemenite government would deny the American request to grant traveling rights to the Jews of Yemen. Recognizing that they had to proceed with caution, the Americans abandoned Track I diplomacy, in which governments confer with other governments on the diplomatic level, in favor of Track II diplomacy, in which private citizens and

politicians collaborate on implementing foreign policy initiatives. Such a procedure would ensure that negotiations remained more discreet and confidential, factors that the Americans saw as indispensable to the success of the mission. Towards that end, the State Department chose the unassuming ICROJOY and its chairman Tawil from amongst a considerable number of Jewish organizations all vying for the privilege of serving as the American delegation.

Tawil visited Yemen for the first time in September 1989. Despite her professed inexperience at fundraising, Tawil's wife, Dalia, managed to solicit contributions in excess of 40,000 dollars in anticipation of their trip. With the money, he purchased large quantities of Jewish books and pairs of *tzitzit* and *tefillin*, all staples of Orthodox Jewish life that were inaccessible to the Jewish community of Yemen.

ICROJOY's unprecedented visit to a Jewish community living in involuntary isolation was a landmark event. Following their trip, the Yemenite government granted foreign Jews entrance visas to visit Yemenite Jews.

Tawil slowly began establishing cordial relations with the Yemenite government. Although on that first visit Tawil did not exert pressure on the Yemenites to issue passports to the Jews, he returned to Yemen many times over the next several years and intensified his efforts to bring the Jewish issue to the fore. He detected a heightened sensitivity in the members of the Yemenite government vis-a-vis the Jews and a willingness on their part to comply with American demands to grant Jews freedom of movement.

These patterns culminated in the dramatic events of June 1991. At that time, the Yemenite government ratified a law officially removing extant obstacles to international travel. Although forbidden from traveling directly to Israel, the Jews were given access to all other countries. In general, the Yemenite Jews first traveled to America or to other countries and proceeded from there to Israel.

Of the estimated 1200 Jews who resided in Yemen in 1989, close to one thousand have left. The remaining handful continues to live in Yemen of their own volition. Tawil dubbed his efforts "Operation Esther," in part as a testimonial to his mother, Esther, who according to Tawil "gave me my love and dedication for the Jewish people."

In addition, Tawil, somewhat assumingly, notes a strong parallel between his efforts and those of the ancient Queen Esther: in both cases, Jews were saved *mimmaqom aher*. It is this initiative taken by individuals and their resolve to succeed that some government officials privy to the details of the mission are reported to have said made this effort so outstanding. "Hayim Tawil spoke the language of sweet reason and of collegial cooperation...I remain convinced that if we had gone in and demanded of the Yemenites...we would not have had any success," claims David Ransom, former U.S. ambassador to Bahrain.

In light of the success of the mission, Tawil says it is disappointing that the state of Yemenite Jewry was neglected by so many for 30 years. "Why could we not do anything for them through 30 years of isolation," he questions. In addition, the glaring absence of Israeli security forces, major Jewish organizations and the United Nations from the mission was unnerving, he says.

Tawil asserts that it was necessary to delay publication of his and Steven Miodownik's book because of complicated political considerations. "We did not want to publicize anything until we knew that all the Jews of Yemen were safe," he explains, afraid that the details of the mission would induce an Arab league backlash that would undermine previous successes.

*Operation Esther is available in hardcover from Belk's Press publishers, 24 Bennett Avenue, NY, NY 10033, suite 24B. The book retails for 25 dollars, and is available at a special student rate of 22 dollars.*

## AECOM Labor Strife Resolved

continued from page 1

ning of the strike. Policy at AECOM does not allow management representatives to deal with union members during regular work hours. Therefore, direct negotiations did not begin each day until the late evening. Gerald Bodner, Labor Counsel for the University, described these sessions, which proceeded well into the early morning hours, as "elongated" in his discussion with *The Commentator*.

An agreement was reached in the early morning hours of November 13. The new contract has a thirty-seven month duration that began retroactively on October 1, 1998 and runs until October 31, 2001.

A statement released by the AECOM Office of Labor Counsel on November 16 listed some preliminary details of the new contract. According to the statement, the settlement provides employees in their first year with a three percent increase in their base rates plus a lump sum bonus of \$750; in their second year, a two percent increase in their base rates plus a lump sum bonus of \$500. In the third and final year, employees will receive another two percent increase and a lump sum payment of \$250.

The statement also suggests that the University prevailed on two important issues. First, the rights of the principal investigators (heads of research laboratories, especially in the Sue Golding Graduate Division) to determine who they hire for their grants will remain fully intact. In addition, the College received the suspension of pension contributions for fif-

teen months.

In terms of percentage, employees at Yeshiva College and Stern College for Women, who barely averted a strike and reached a new contract earlier in October, did better than their counterparts at AECOM. The total increase over the thirty-seven months at AECOM equals seven percent, while at the undergraduate schools the increase amounts to ten percent. The disparity is mostly due to the higher wages that had already been in place at the medical school.

Despite the failure to fully achieve the wage increase that was sought, officials from 1199 noted other points of success in the new contract. Frankel touted improvements in the pensions and health care plans, as well as increased allocations for the child care and tuition funds.

Sentiments between the two sides remains cool. Frankel told *The Commentator*, "You would like to think that the people you are dealing with would take you seriously...without having to threaten...but, the College doesn't work that way."

The University was unremitting in its policy not to reimburse striking workers for time lost due to participation in protests. The average loss of wages per employee was estimated at \$300. Some AECOM students expressed support for the University's policy and wondered about the merits of this particular strike.

All employees were reportedly back at their jobs by noon on Friday.

## Web Site Revamped

Continued from page 24

the web site must apply for an account. The application can be printed off the web and will have to be signed by the person in charge of that section of the site, known as the content owner. This would be professors for their own pages and a dean or administrator for the sections of the site relating to their functions. Once someone has an account, he can use that account to connect to an internal staging server accessible only to authorized users using FrontPage, and can then create the content. This can only be done on a computer that is part of the YU Internet network. When the pages have been created or updated, the content owner will look at the new pages on the staging server, again only accessible from a computer on the YU network. If the content owner approves, he sends an email to Deering indicating which pages are ready to go up, and if the pages fit the predefined rules of style, Deering will promote those pages to the main web site for all the world to see.

To facilitate ease of access, the YC Deans' office has been connected to the YU Internet network. In addition, MIS will be installing FrontPage on the lab computers. According to Joe McGoldrick of MIS, the software will be installed at least on the new Dell machines in computer rooms 1103 and 1111. However, due to space constraints, they may not be able to install it on the library computers.

MIS has purchased a site license for FrontPage, which will cover only installations in the computer rooms. Faculty members who wish to be able to use the software will have to purchase their own copies or have their department pay for the copy. However, by purchasing it through YU, they will be able to obtain the software at a significant discount.

Reaction to the new site was mixed. Menachem Berkowitz, President of the YU Computer Science Club, said that "aesthet-

ics aside, the problem with the YU web site is its lack of useful content. Only time will tell whether the new system will alleviate this problem." YC Dean Norman Adler had not yet seen the new site, but stressed that the major advantage of the new system would be the "proliferation of faculty pages." He was confident that the system would be met with enthusiasm by his staff, saying, "They [the faculty] have been waiting for it. It's going to take off."

Decisions on what type of content will be allowed on the site will be made by David Rosen, Director of Public Relations. Faculty and academic content will be less tightly controlled; however, Rosen will be the final arbiter of all administrative content. He stressed that admissions and alumni affairs are going to be his main priority. Currently, neither department has any representation on the web site.

As for student content, Rosen stated that he was hoping to meet with Dean of Student Affairs Efram Nulman to discuss the possibility of giving space to student clubs and activities. When asked whether student home pages or student publications such as *The Commentator* would be allowed on the site, Rosen responded with a definite "no." Rosen explained that "the purpose of the site is to promote the educational and advancement functions of the university, to help faculty and academic deans teach and conduct research, and to help departments reach constituencies that they need for financial or other support. It is not a platform to enable students to express themselves individually or politically." While the opportunity to create both individual pages and sites for student publications is given to students at almost all top-tier universities, Rosen did not see any need for YU to change its web policy. He explained, "Some schools provide [their web sites] as a public service — a free-for-all, and that is not what this site is about."

## Fall Dorm Talks: NCSY and the Starr Report— The Choices We Face

BY DAVID MIRSKY

Enticed by topics of discussion dealing with the Jewish approach to the Starr Report, the oversleeping roommate, visiting a Conservative Temple, and the NCSY Kiruv bug, dorm residents trickled into Morgenstern Hall lounge for Fall '98 Dorm Talks. This first Dorm Talks event of the year, held on Wednesday, October 21, drew a sizable crowd that came to hear Rabbi Dr. Bernard Rosensweig and Rabbi Dr. Moshe D. Tendler, the two panelists for the evening, grapple with the scenarios constructed by Rabbi Gedalya Berger.

Rabbi Rosensweig is currently a professor of Jewish History at the James Striar School of Judaic Studies and at Yeshiva College. He is also Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Adas Yeshurun in Kew Gardens. Rabbi Tendler, a Rosh Yeshiva at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) and a professor of Biology at Yeshiva College, is a world-renowned medical ethicist. Rabbi Yosef Blau, Mashgiach Ruchani at RIETS, moderated the event, coordinated by Rabbi Joshua Cheifetz.

Describing a YU student with a rigorous schedule, the first scenario portrayed a student who could barely "keep his head above water" while he tackled his dual curriculum in his first few weeks of college after returning from two years of study in Israel. This student, lured by NCSY outreach representatives, is faced with the dilemma of deciding his level of involvement in the organization while in college. Comparing the student to a "juggler," Rabbi Tendler cracked that maybe this scenario requires one to save this person as he is seemingly "drowning" in his commitments. Tendler related that his father-in-law, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, often said that time is money in American society, meaning that you have to "tithe" your time as well as your money. You have to decide "who the recipient should be and how it should be done" when giving of your precious time. In response to the question of whether the NCSY *shabbaton* atmosphere is consonant with a "yeshiva" lifestyle, Tendler pointed out that it can be a paradoxical, Red Heifer-like situation, in which the person helping others might become tainted by helping others return to their roots, citing *Michtav M'Ellyahu* which teaches that "it is hard not to get dirty" when doing outreach work. Tendler doubted whether it is appropriate for a young yeshiva student, with limited experience and dealing with a heavy schedule, to be "exposed to that problem" of the possible negative effects of performing outreach work. Tendler qualified his warning against outreach work by commenting that we need to improve the quality of outreach, and to "put on a show; make believe you're a *Talmud Chacham*" is not real outreach, emphasizing that students are "not the one's who should be doing it." Tendler concluded that Yeshiva University will not make us *Talmidei Chachamim*, but will give us the "keys" to attain greater knowledge in our later lives as long as we take the time to "open the door" while in college.

Responding to the first scenario, Rabbi Rosensweig pointed out that we all have to struggle with the conflict "between self-perfection on the one hand, and the need to share with others on the other hand." Rosensweig, who claims to have spearheaded much of Canadian NCSY, mentioned that we can strive to share our experiences with others, showing others "living exemplars of what a Torah Jew is supposed to be." Contrary to Tendler, Rosensweig considers giving up a shabbat at home or in yeshiva a worthwhile endeavor, maintaining that often

the "result of our participating in these programs affords us an opportunity to appreciate what it is that we have really achieved."

Turning the crowd's attention to another pressing concern among Yeshiva students, the next topic considered a student confronted with the prospect of visiting a conservative temple and his dilemma in deciding his degree of participation in the services of such an institution. Opening his remarks with the comment that "a Jew is a Jew" and that we have to have concern for all Jews, Rosensweig opined that we are not obligated to "love everything that every Jew does." He continued, saying that there is a clear difference in kind between Torah Judaism and Reform Judaism, while the difference between Reform and Conservative movements is one of degree. Rosensweig, a previous president of the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), cited Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik as the "guiding spirit" of the RCA and the guidelines that he set down in dealing with the Reform and Conservative movements. With his commitment to the concerns of the Jewish community as a whole, the Rav felt, according to Rosensweig, that there may be "no divisiveness in this area" and that we must be united. However, in matters of schools, synagogues, and like spiritual matters, Orthodoxy should remain separate from groups that "deny the foundations" of Torah Judaism.

Expressing his angst at the problem that the Conservative and Reform movements pose for Torah Judaism, Tendler expressed his belief that these liberal movements are "no longer part of the stock; no longer part of the tree of Judaism" in light of their "aggressive" attitude in claiming that Orthodox Jews are outcasts and that they now represent "true Judaism." According to Tendler, Reform Judaism is "no longer a Jewish faith," and Conservative Jews "don't know who they are" by denying the *halakhic* process. Tendler went on to caution that it is inappropriate for Torah Jews to participate in Conservative prayer services, fearing that it might lead to legitimization of their dogma.

Regarding the question of whether it is appropriate to read such things as the Starr report in its lurid detail and keep abreast of current politics, Rabbi Rosensweig stated that if you "close your eyes" to issues such as Judge Starr's report, you might as well "sit in your house and never walk out the door," considering the issues that you confront in every day life. Citing the sages, Rosensweig explains that everything we see is not always in our control, but what we do with what we see is "the key to how we live as Jews." We need to belong to the rest of the world around us, and confront the Starr report and other such events, according to Rosensweig, and we should be "sophisticated enough to be able to distinguish and to bring our own value judgements to bear on all of these things."

Playing on the very title of the event, Tendler suggested that it is not only that we have Dorm Talks, but that we should consider exactly how the "dorm talks," referring to the need for us to be more careful with our words in this institution. Tendler expressed his opinion that anyone who read the Starr Report violated *halakha*, "no doubt about it." In regards to the dilemma whether to read the *New York Times* and the like at all, Tendler feels that we have to know what goes on in the outside world, encouraging us to utilize our own discretion in what we read, concluding that at times we must be different in our efforts to live up to the "chosenness" which has been bestowed upon us.



## In Search of the Holy Snail: The Story of Tekhelet

BY AKIVA HERZFELD

In 1888 the Radzyner Rebbe, Rav Gershon Henokh Leiner, left the province of Lublin, Poland, as well as his community of chasidim in Radzyn, to study sea fauna at an aquarium in Naples. He had formulated, in the previous year, a short treatise that asserted that one must only fulfill the obligation to wear *tekhelet* with the same marine species that had been used in years past. Since the Radzyner Rebbe had no reason to believe that this specific marine species, (Heb.) *hilazon*, required for *tekhelet* had become extinct, he set off to Naples to search for the *hilazon*.

*Tekhelet* are dyed threads that are to be attached to the *tzitzit*, or fringes; when looked upon, these threads will remind one of all the commandments in the Torah (Num. 15:38-39). The tradition of what specific creature could be identified with the *hilazon* and the process of extracting the dye from that creature had been lost to the Jewish people in the period between the fifth and eighth centuries. Following the loss of the tradition for *tekhelet*, the topic became a relatively dormant topic in Jewish law for centuries. With the advent of religious Zionism in the nineteenth century, however, practical *halakhic* issues concerning the land of Israel and requirements for the rebuilding of the Temple once again were raised. *Tekhelet* was one such issue.

The Radzyner Rebbe thought he could settle the issue of *tekhelet* in Naples by finding the *hilazon* needed for *tekhelet* and then reinstating the practice. The Radzyner Rebbe did, indeed, find a squid that he believed matched the criteria of the ancient *hilazon* in Naples. Thereupon, the Radzyner Rebbe, perhaps with the help of an Italian scientist, extracted the dye from the squid, and announced to the *halakhic* world that he had rediscovered the *hilazon* and the process for making *tekhelet*. The next year he opened up a dye factory in Radzyn. Nevertheless, with the exception of 10,000 chasidim in Radzyn, nearly all authorities rejected the authenticity of the Radzyner Rebbe's claim, and most Jews held on to their plain white strings.

### Yeshiva University

Today, once again, there stirs a new movement to wear *tekhelet*. Yet, the origins and atmosphere providing the impetus for this movement have less to do with a chasidic sect in Eastern Poland and more to do with a university in Washington Heights with a *Torah U'madda* philosophical orientation.

Yeshiva University leads the way in accepting a new strand of *tekhelet*, which has been extracted from a snail on the northern Mediterranean coast of Israel. Only recently – within the past five years – has this *tekhelet* been made widely avail-

able for purchase for *tzitzit*. YU leads the way not only because many of the leading rabbis at YU have given their stamp of approval to this new *tekhelet*, and not only because the emphasis of YU on learning Torah and science is consistent with the type of knowledge that made the advent of this new *tekhelet* possible, but also because some of the leading figures in the attempt to reintroduce *tekhelet* have graduated from Yeshiva College. In fact, even the downtown campus of YU has involved itself in the *tekhelet* story, as Stern girls have tied the knot with nearly every man involved in the current endeavor to reinstall *tekhelet* into the daily dress code. It is perhaps due to one of these listed reasons that today in many Haredi and Chasidic circles the new strand of *tekhelet* is actually called, "Yeshiva University *tekhelet*."

Not everyone, however, is pleased with this sobriquet for the new *tekhelet*. Dr. Baruch Serman, a man intimately involved in every aspect of the movement to reintroduce *tekhelet*, said he objects to the classification of these *tekhelet* as "Yeshiva University *Tekhelet*." Dr. Serman has heard the new *tekhelet* referred to by many names – Yeshiva University *tekhelet*, Efrat *tekhelet*, *misnagdisha tekhelet*, *kipah serugah tekhelet* – but he believes that "it is unfair to impose a class upon it." He illustrated his point by pointing to two prominent rabbis not from YU, Zalman Nechemiah Goldberg, one of the leading Haredi rabbis, and Rav Twerski, among chasidim, who both are "strong proponents" of wearing the new *tekhelet*.

"If anything, it's the opposite of the ideology of YU," Dr. Serman added. "The one strongest opponent, and the only one who has had ideological opposition to it has been Rav Soloveitchik zt"l, the Rav – the only one who has come out with a conclusive reason not to wear *tekhelet*." (The Rav had spoken about *tekhelet* on a theoretical level before he passed away.) "*Tekhelet* is a mitzvah for all Jews," Dr. Serman added, "not any specific group."

Baruch Serman himself graduated from Yeshiva College in 1982. After graduating from YU, Baruch went to Columbia, received a Masters degree in electrical engineering, married Judy Taubes (daughter to YC English Professor Leo Taubes), moved to Israel, and received a doctorate in physics from Hebrew University. In an interview with *The Commentator* from his home in Efrat, Israel, Dr. Serman told the story of how it has once again become possible to wear *tekhelet*, and he described his specific role in the story's development.

### The Science of Discovery

While it is true that the "Yeshiva University *tekhelet*" has only recently become available, there is a long history to

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## Tekhelet: Continued from page 20

the process that led to its emergence. The story begins in 1858 with French zoologist Henri de Lacaze-Duthiers, who discovered the *Murex trunculus* mollusk in the Mediterranean sea and determined that it provided the Biblical purple-blue dye in ancient times.

Although Lacaze-Duthiers had published his finding even before the Radzyner Rebbe left to Naples, Lacaze-Duthiers' French zoology periodical never quite made it into the Torah study hall in Radzyn. Rabbi Issac Herzog, who would later become Chief Rabbi of Israel, did, however, come across the findings of Lacaze Duthiers when he was doing research for his doctorate on *tekhelet*. Nevertheless, Rav Herzog, who had unequivocally rejected the Radzyner's *tekhelet*, saw difficulties in identifying Lacaze-Duthiers' *Murex trunculus* snail with the *hilazon*. In his doctorate, Rav Herzog pointed to a principal obstacle that prevented him from accepting the *Murex trunculus* snail: the dye extracted from the snail was purple, not Biblical blue.

Rav Herzog published his doctorate in 1914. While the issue of *tekhelet* continued to be discussed after Rav Herzog, the prospect of wearing blue string's on one's tzitzit seemed no closer than in past years. Then, approaching close to twenty-five years ago, a Holocaust survivor, Professor Otto Elsner, from the Shenkar College of Fibers in Israel, accidentally detected that if one exposes the *trunculus* dye to sunlight when the dye is in a reduced state, the dye will turn into a pure blue. It now became apparent to all who read the "Journal of the Oriental Dyers Association" that there was another reason to believe that the snail used for dye in classical times was the *murex trunculus*.

### Catching Snails

With the new finding of Professor Elsner, and together with other archaeological, historical, textual, and scientific proofs, the *trunculus* snail began to be recognized by both scholarly and rabbinic minds to have more than likely been the source for blue dye in the ancient world. In the late 1980's Rav Eliyahu Tevger, who was writing a book on *tzitzit*, searched for these snails on Israeli beaches, and after much experimentation, produced the first pair of *tzitzit* with *tekhelet* from this snail. In 1988, Joel Guberman, whose brother Avi had passed away in a tragic car accident, spoke to Rav Tevger about the possibility of performing a mitzvah to commemorate the memory of his brother. Rav Tevger suggested *tekhelet*. Soon after this, Joel Guberman and his two good friends, Dr. Baruch Sterman (YC '82) and Dr. Ari Greenspan (YC '83) were making preparations for a scuba diving in search of snails in northern Israel. After not finding the correct snails in Caesaria and Acco, the three dove into the waters at Achziv, near the northernmost tip of Israel, and worked all day to pull out as many snails as they could. After a whole day's work in the water, they had enough snails for five pairs of *tzitzit*.

"The biggest problem in the beginning," said Dr. Sterman, "was getting snails." "We could go out once a year, and then it took six months to prepare the dye; and we would try to prepare every little drop in front of *rabbanim*."

"We eventually made more," Dr. Sterman added, "but then the organization for the defense of nature in Israel limited the number of snails we could take out." The situation at that point seemed wickedly ironic and unfortunate to the few men involved in trying to reinstate the mitzvah of *tekhelet*. After an interlude of more than a thousand years, the *mitzvah* seemed so

close at hand, with only one small obstacle preventing them: they could not get snails. "But then," Dr. Sterman said, "I took a trip to Germany."

On his way to Germany, where he was going to attend a laser conference for business, Dr. Sterman stopped off in Greece. He said, "I had heard that in Greece I might be able to get these snails."

On a Friday afternoon, Dr. Sterman traveled from Athens to Corinth, "stopping in every single village on the way up" to look for snails, and getting "very frustrated." "Finally," he said, "I found a little hut on a beach with an old man selling these snails. I immediately bought all the snails he had, broke them all open right there, pulled all the glands out, and stuffed them in a little jar." (The dye from the snails must be removed immediately after the shell is broken or it is ruined.) While Dr. Sterman was assiduously preparing his dye, the whole village had congregated to look, and with them "you had a whole crowd of little Greek children just staring at me baffled."

Dr. Sterman "just made it back to his hotel in time for shabbat," and then he carried his seven kilo jar of snail glands with him to Germany, before bringing it to Israel. From that jar, they produced forty sets of *tekhelet*, which they presented to many leading figures in the rabbinate, including principal YU authorities. Dr. Sterman came to speak at YU, after Rav Michael Taubes, the principal of MTA and the brother of Dr. Sterman's wife Judy, arranged with Rav Schachter to have Dr. Sterman speak in Rav Schachter's shiur. After Dr. Sterman spoke in Rav Schachter's shiur, Rav Schachter supported Dr. Sterman's claim.

### Manuel, Manuel, and Jerez

With Rav Schachter, Dr. Lamm, and others from YU supporting *tekhelet*, things looked immediately promising for *Amutat P'til Tekhelet*, the organization formed by Joel Guberman, Dr. Sterman, Dr. Greenspan, and Rav Tevger. Things, however, were not settled just yet. Although Dr. Ari Greenspan and Joel Guberman took a trip to Greece and cracked open 10,000 snails, the process was not going smoothly.

"The problem was," Dr. Sterman griped, "that the Greek people were completely incompetent and unreliable. We called them up and we would say, 'We need snails.' And they'd say, 'Yes.' But then we'd never hear from them again. The whole thing was very strange ... we offered them money, but the Greeks just had no interest in working."

The *Amutat P'til Tekhelet* organization, however, once again received a fortunate break, this time effectuated by YC graduate Dr. Ari Greenspan, a dentist.

Like all other dentists, Dr. Ari Greenspan has a captive audience in his dentist chair, and may talk about whatever he wishes. Dr. Sterman said, "Whenever Dr. Greenspan had a patient, he would always talk about snails." Eventually, one of Dr. Greenspan's patients who had done business in Spain, after listening to Dr. Greenspan go on about snails, said, "You could get these snails in Spain. I know a guy who you can get in touch with." Not long after this conversation, Joel Guberman and Dr. Baruch Sterman were on a plane headed for Jerez, Spain. Dr. Sterman estimated the year was 1993.

Jerez, Spain, is well known for being the city from which we derive the name for the drink sherry, and it is also well known for its celebrated Andalusian dancing horses. Less well known is that Jerez was the first city in Spain to exile its Jews. In any case, in Jerez, Dr. Sterman and Joel Guberman met with Manuel the fisherman, who did not

speak any English, and Manuel the banker, who did speak English. Dr. Sterman borrowed ten thousand dollars, and *Amutat P'til Tekhelet* purchased two tons worth of snails from the Manuels. From this purchase, *Amutat P'til Tekhelet* was able to produce enough *tekhelet* for a few hundred pairs of *tzitzit*. "This guy was a businessman already," Dr. Sterman said, "and we figured everything was set; we had everything we needed ... actually, it didn't work out."

The problem was that in 1995 a massive oil spill off the coast of Spain led the Spanish government to forbid all types of fishing because of a possible health hazard. The *Amutat P'til Tekhelet* and the two Manuels tried convincing the Spanish government that they were not going to eat the snails, but they had no success. Only recently did the Spanish government permit all fishing again. Since then the two Manuels have been able to pull out as many snails as are demanded. After the snails are pulled from the sea, the Chief Rabbi of Gibraltar, Rav Hasid, directs the process for removing the glands.

### Preserving Tradition

At the conclusion of his interview with *The Commentator*, Dr. Sterman discussed certain objections to wearing *tekhelet*. One objection is that we are in a certain sense laughing at the *rishonim*, or earlier rabbis, by wearing *tekhelet*. To this Dr. Sterman said, "We are not making fun of anybody. We are just using newfound knowledge to do the best that we can. For instance Rav Avraham Twerski wears *tekhelet*; but his great-grandfather argued very strongly against the Radzyner. So at one point we asked him why, and he answered, 'My great-grandfather argued with the Radzyner because there were problems with the Radzyner's *tekhelet*, but if my great-grandfather were alive and judged this *tekhelet*, he would put it on.'"

Another objection to the new *tekhelet* has been that the *velt*, the world, does not wear it. To this Dr. Sterman retorted, "In my opinion, the only valid reason to object is the reason of the Rav, the *mesorah*. Who listens to the *velt*? You listen to the Torah! You can't make an assumption that doing the same thing that you're parents did is following their practices and beliefs; and I heard this from Rav Schachter: Following tradition blindly is not necessarily preserving the integrity of tradition because situations change and without recognizing this you can be completely distorting the ideology of the past."

In a recent article in the *Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society on Tekhelet*, Chaim Twerski writes that we can not be certain that the *tekhelet* of the *Amutat* organization is definitely the *tekhelet* that was worn in the past. There are statements in the Talmud that do not correspond completely with this new *tekhelet*. Nevertheless, Chaim Twerski concludes by saying that "this identification ought to be accepted by many, if not the majority of *poskim*."

For the first time since the third century when the Roman emperors forbade the wearing of *tekhelet*, it now seems that it is within the means of every Jew, both legally and financially, to buy the same *tekhelet* that was almost certainly used in classical times and that is described in the Torah. In the end, it seems that the primary question about the "Yeshiva University *tekhelet*" for many rabbis is not, "Is this actually the genuine *tekhelet* worn in the past?" Rather, the question for many seems to be, "Is it worth my while to change?"

Akiva Herzfeld is studying at Yeshivat Hamivtar in Efrat.

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**Yeshiva Sports**

## Macs Get Rocked in Off-Season

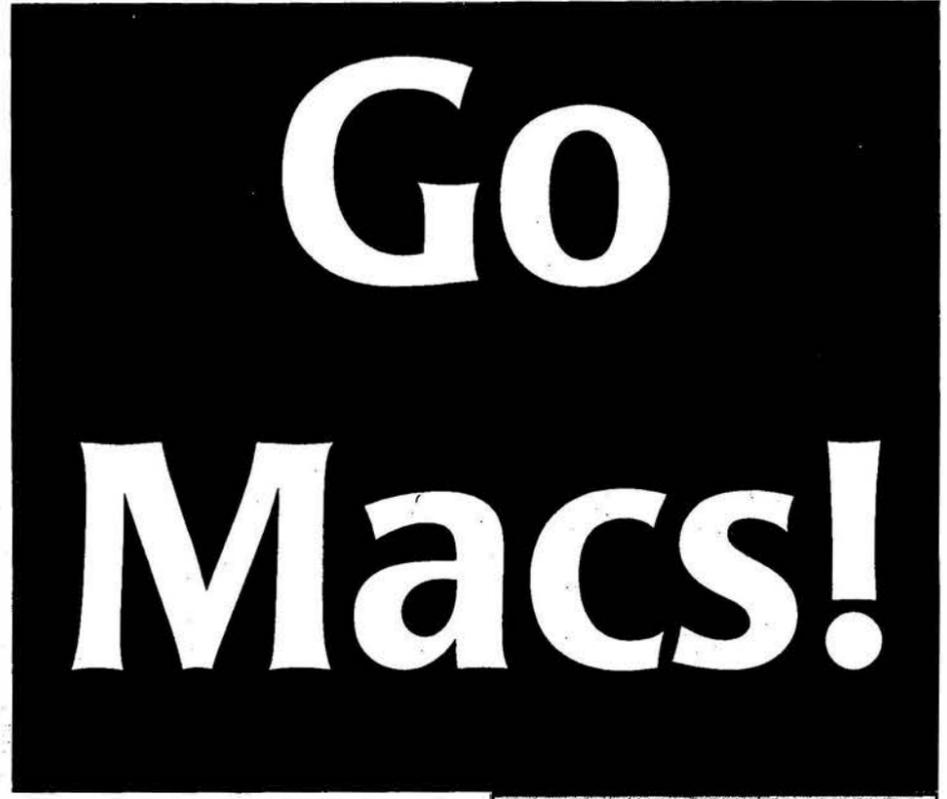
BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

The Yeshiva University basketball team is once again gearing up for another winning season, but pessimists say that the outcome of the 98-99 season was determined in the off-season. The Macs, coming off a stellar season last year in which they just missed the playoffs, lost star players Joel Jacobson, Brian Wein, and Alon Zaibert to graduation. Marc Nadritch, David Neiss, and Alex Shakhmurov are the only players on this year's team who have seen major playing time in previous years. Nadritch, one of the captains of the team, however, is out for the season, having undergone extensive knee surgery. Shakhmurov, the 6'6" center, is sitting out for the first semester as well, because of NCAA redshirt rules.

David Neiss, the other captain, will get help from returning players Joel Kruger, Avi Karesh, Shane Rabin, and Yoni Zadok. Neiss, whose incredible hustle sparked many of the Macs' victories last season, is thrilled about the addition of guards Dov Wiener and Nachum Palefski. Wiener, a sophomore, and Palefski, a junior, are considered by some to be the best orthodox ballplayers their age. Wiener has deadly 3-point range and an amazing crossover dribble; Palefski has more basketball talent than this team has seen in years.

Another big addition to the team is Yossie Gev. Gev, who comes to Yeshiva right out of the Israeli army, is built rock-solid. He has impressed his teammates and coaches with his accurate line-drive jumpers. Yet another addition, Tuvi Meyer, will have to step up at the center position until Shakhmurov returns to play.

Former standout intramural player, Uri Yudowitz, will be playing for the Macs this year as well. Yudowitz took YU by surprise last year with his incredible 3 point shoot-



ing and his court-savvy skills. The Macs are rounded out with new players Lenny Himmelfarb, Steven Bernstein, Asaf Hod, and David Battalion. Battalion surprised many in YU athletic circles when he became the first player in YU history to try out for the basketball team wearing what seemed to be pants.

The Macs opened their season with an exhibition game consisting of three 20-minute "halves" against St. Thomas Aquinas. The team played excellently at the start, building a 43-40 lead, but things got rocky when one St. Thomas Aquinas player dunked on the Macs eight times in nine minutes, and the Macs eventually lost the game.

Yet hope for the basketball team remains high. Students are excited about their team, and are looking forward to another successful season. Both players and coaches expect to give their best in pursuit of that elusive holy grail of YU basketball, a playoff berth.

## The Fencing Macs: Slicing the Competition

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

The Yeshiva Macs Fencing team fought their two first-semester meets, taking an early 2-5 team score versus the competition. While the team usually begins the season with a home meet, this year, the first competition to test their mettle was the annual Baltimore trip, in which various teams gather at Johns Hopkins University (JHU) to fence. The home meet took place one week afterwards, on November 15, as YU hosted Vassar and Hunter Colleges.

After spending a relaxing shabbat with members of the Baltimore community, the fencers arrived at JHU and focused on the immediate task of defeating Virginia Military Institution, a new member to the Mid-Atlantic Conference Fencing Coalition, MACFA. The Macs proved victorious in their first bout. However, this win was an un auspicious beginning to the day, as the team lost to all the other schools participating.

Yet, amidst the smoldering ruins of a 1-4 record, there still exists much to be upbeat about. The team lost to JHU by a score of 16-11, the closest they ever came to beating perennial powerhouse Hopkins. Propelled forward by the epee team and a strong desire to smash Hopkins, the fencers tried their best, but the virgin status of the Macs foll squad - all first-year and first-time fencers - dictated the team's disappointing outcome.

Out of the three weapon squads, epee is

the strongest, due to returning fencers in all starting positions, and they took JHU 7-2. Sabre, the next weapon along the winning-percentage axle, led by fourth-year fencer and weapons leader Avraham Goldberg and partial returnee Micha Mandel, took four bouts from Hopkins.

Unfortunately for the Macs, foil weapons leader and solitary returnee in foil, Yevgeny Povlovsky, was injured earlier in the day and couldn't fence against JHU.

Some personal highlights were: Co-Captains Hadar Weiss, who swept his Hopkins opponents, (Epee;10-5) and Steve Mellner (Epee;9-6) finished with records good enough to qualify for All-Conference in MACFA; Alex Traidman (Epee;6-7) ended on a high note, winning 3 of his last 4; Avraham Goldberg (Sabre;8-7); first-timer Micha Mandel (Sabre; 6-6). Also noteworthy were Yevgeny Povlovsky's 4 wins, after a winless first season.

At home, Yeshiva beat one of its two guests, while narrowly losing to the second. Vassar, previously a women's-only college, defeated YU by two bouts, but the Macs asserted themselves against Hunter to pull off a win. Some personal records from that meet were: Avraham Goldberg's 6-0; Steve Mellner's 5-0; and Alex Traidman's 4-1.

The lull now begins for the fencing team. This semester's meets are over, yet training must continue in earnest as the season returns with a vengeance immediately upon the team's return from winter break. Every

## Cross Country Team Keeps On Running

BY COACH STAN WATSON

As Cross Country coach, completing this tenth season proved to be a satisfying close to a decade of coaching. The recently concluded Halloween invitational run drew some 63 male and close to forty female runners from three colleges, Polytechnic University, Stevens Tech and YU. The 5 mile race saw its seventh year since the inaugural 1992 race, still Yeshiva's most successful track season to date.

Because of the usual roster of non-egotistical, reflective, fun and legitimately good group of young men who trained well and showed responsibly for each race, I have no choice but to declare my tenth season (I took over from Dr. Bernie Martin, then Coach John Mulligan in 1988) a definitely pleasant one.

Welcomed newcomers like Daniel Hartstien, Joe Zimbalist, Chaim Strauchler and returnees like Yitz Motzen, Moshe Abehsera, David Mirsky, and Paul "Pinkie" Mikhli made this 5 mile run season a joy. I commend the team for its commitment, race day responsibility, and for being competitive in all the races even though we can't train as the other schools do. A job well done by all. (Record was 2-2-1 with no wins or losses for the Halloween Invitational.)

*Liberate the Lawn! Play football on the grass!!!*

Sunday from the end of January through mid-March, is a scheduled meet, and they must even find a Thursday afternoon when they can travel to fence St. John's University in Queens.

Of surprise to some at Facilities Management was the viewer turnout for the home fencing meet. While fencing is not a mainstream sport, this year proved that many fellow students and faculty enjoy watching the fencing team defend YU's honor with hard steel.

# YESHIVA COLLEGE

## CAMPUS NEWS

### OPCS Stages Career Fair to Mixed Reviews



BY MIKE ZAIDEL

On October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1998, the Office of Placement and Career Services staged its hallmark Career Fair. From anxious seniors to curious freshman, hundreds of Yeshiva University and Stern College students crowded into two floors of Belfer Hall for the function.

After entering and registering, students were given a pamphlet entitled "Career Fair Pointers." The principal section of the hand-out listed the firms represented at the fair. Over one hundred companies, organizations, and graduate schools sent representatives to the career fair. These representatives were eager to answer various questions regarding job opportunities and criteria considered in hiring decisions.

Unlike other OPCS events, which are targeted specifically for Sy Syms students, the Career Fair was intended to afford students of all majors the opportunity to explore professional options. It was unclear whether the function had fulfilled this objective. Many YC students told *The Commentator* that they were dissatisfied with the fair. In the words of one YC senior, "There were no quality options for me at the fair. A hodgepodge of small time concerns that would be lucky to land community college grads showed up, but this hardly qualifies as a legitimate effort to find me gainful employment. There were no con-

sulting firms worth their salt at the fair. I guess I'm back to *The Times* Employment Section. Thanks for nothing." Another YC student remarked, "It's clear that liberal arts majors are at best an afterthought for the Placement Office. They should rename themselves the Placement Office for Students with Business Majors. Why is [Dean Ira] Jaskoll, an obvious partisan who speaks openly against the College, running placement for all undergrads?"

For Yeshiva University students with an interest in business though, opportunities were plentiful. Besides the many accounting and finance firms present at all OPCS events, students with marketing or management information system interest also were shown many career ideas. Steven Farkas and Harrison Nadel, two Yeshiva graduates, are employees of University Sports. This company sells advertisements for team yearbooks and is a great opportunity for someone with salesman skills as well as interest in sports marketing.

Hillel Axelrod, another Yeshiva alumnus, presented at the Career Fair. Axelrod is the Director of Recruiting Services for The Wayne Group, Ltd. His job is to find individuals with abilities in information technology services and place them at financial institutions that need their services. Management Information System students desiring an easier route for employment might try the Wayne Group. Their clients include Deloitte & Touche, J.P. Morgan, and PriceWaterhouseCoopers. Hillel Axelrod felt MIS students should take advantage of the "relationships developed with financial institutions by the Wayne Group," to better their chances for lateral job shifts.

Another organization involved in information technology at the career fair was Keane, Inc. Their representative, Tasha Przbyszewski, said Keane is a company that assists Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, and healthcare institutions in their quest for tech-

nical support and advance. Keane does not limit recruitment to MIS majors. The company begins with a training program in technical maintenance.

Some options were clearly intended to appeal to students in the College. For students with an interest in social services, Paul Jimenez of YAI, the National Institute for People with Disabilities, was there for advice. YAI, he said, has many opportunities for internships as well as full-time positions. While not fully necessary, Mr. Jimenez stressed the benefit of experience assisting mentally retarded individuals and a psychology or sociology background.

Ohel Children's Home and Family Services is seen as another great opportunity for students interested in social service involvement. Its representative, Elise Levy, stressed that students with any background can find either full time or part time work at Ohel. With facilities in Queens, Brooklyn, and Manhattan, as well as training on the job, students can easily be placed in counselor positions.

Representatives from the NYC Board of Education greeted students with an interest in education. Alan Weinstein implored Yeshiva University students to consider the teaching profession, as there exists a tremendous demand for teachers, particularly in the fields of math and science. Mr. Weinstein stated that a YU student with only eighteen credits of a science could teach high school science in NYC public schools. The need for teachers, he said, is so great that the NYC Board of Education has had to go to Australia and other foreign countries to secure instructors.

Many other positions and fields were also represented at the career fair. Despite the complaints of YC students, many others found the Career Fair to be valuable. Even an anonymous Sy Syms student who "came just for the free stuff" saw the night as a productive one.

### YU Web Site Revamped New System to Allow Easy Faculty Access

BY BEN SANDLER

Yeshiva University's official web site underwent a major face lift last week. New graphics and a comprehensive set of links on the front page give the site a look and feel more consistent with other major university's sites. In addition, the site was moved from its old home on the ymail UNIX server to a Windows environment. The change was made in order to make it easier for many people to create and be responsible for their own content on the site.

Tom Deering, Coordinator of Web Services for the YU MIS department, said that the project to revamp the web site began last March in search of a way to give people more access to put their material on line. With no official rules or procedures regarding what content was appropriate for the site, the prevailing attitude was to be conservative, and thus very little content made it on to the site. The new setup is designed to streamline the process of posting pages online. This is done by using software called Microsoft FrontPage, which gives people a graphical layout of their section of the site, or "web," and allows them to create content as easily as using a word processor. Deering will be giving a class on Tuesdays, starting this week, in how to create web pages with FrontPage.

Deering described the procedure for getting material online as follows: Anyone interested in working on part of

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### Football On The Grass COMMENTATOR "Lawn Liberation Bowl" Champions

On Thursday November 5, the collective student leadership of YU reclaimed the Danciger Quadrangle in the name of the student body, as THE COMMENTATOR challenged YCSC to a no holds barred football game. THE COMMENTATOR soundly defeated YCSC, 28-7.

Far Left: YCSC President Dror Barber moonlighting at quarterback.

Left: Commentator Quarterback Alex "Gus" Traiman celebrates touchdown pass.

Right: Commie Editors Adam Moses and Mordechai Fishman are actually seen on campus.

Far Right: Everyone jump on Gus (not seen-bottom of pile).

Bottom: Students enjoying the grass...FINALLY!



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